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20
PAGES OF
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TO FISH



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DISCOVERS BASS FISHING





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WELCOME

ISSUE 612

AUGUST 2022



The arrival of warm water species in summer is always my favourite time of the fishing year. Each year I plan to tick another bunch of species or techniques off my wish list, but rarely do I get the opportunity to make it happen. The various species of bream are some of my favourite summer visitors. Not only do they tend to look amazing, but they fight hard and taste great too. What's not to like?

This month we bring you some of the best summer fishing that the UK has to offer and we begin on page eight with a familiar face to the world of athletics and coarse fishing, Dean Macey, who, after 45 years of living next to the sea on Canvey Island in Essex, has discovered the joy of sea angling and has taken up bass fishing with the same amount of enthusiasm and dedication I can only imagine he put into his athletics career; he's a man on a mission!

Will Cooper then reacquaints us with one of our most undervalued summer species – the mighty mackerel (page 20). Will explains how to target specimens using metal lures on light tackle, a method that can provide frenetic action and great sport whatever level of experience you have. Personally, I never tire of catching them. There's always time for a spot of mackie bashing!

Using metal lures and light tackle is, again, the approach Chris Kennedy takes on page 25 when he targets the quite magnificent looking Couch's bream from Maseline Harbour on Sark in the Channel Islands. Chris's experimenting and trial and error sessions have rewarded him with a tried and tested tactic for catching these wonderful fish.

Don't miss Jeff Jeeves' bass fishing article on page 73. Jeff and his fellow

boat anglers at Ramsgate Harbour in Kent have perfected a new technique for fishing soft plastics at anchor. It has resulted in some astonishing catches and is a real case of innovation overcoming a problem when the shoals of mackerel they would usually live bait for bass with all but disappeared. Give it a go and get in touch with Sea Angler to let us know how you've got along.

Bass, bream as well as smoothhounds and tope, were all species in abundance in the Solent last month for the 2022 Sea Angling Classic boat fishing competition. We report back on a hugely successful four-day event where over a thousand fish were recorded in two days of fishing; the winners claiming a £50,000 cash prize at the end of it. Read the full report on page 64 and keep your eyes out for news of the 2023 event in future issues.

This issue sees the first in a new series by Henry Gilbey (page 13) on how to take better fishing photographs. Henry is a professional photographer and his easy-to-follow tips and advice will help you improve your photo taking skills and make sure your catches are captured like a pro.

Don't miss this month's Match Tips feature (page 108) with match fishing ace Saul Page. Kent-based Saul won the 2021 Penn Sea League and is currently topping the leader board in the 2022 competition. Not only is Saul a great bloke but it's interesting to discover how his communication skills and ability to make friends and talk to people has obviously helped him in his match fishing career.

Aspiring match champions take note!

Finally, just before going to press we heard the news that Zziplex will be closing down and ceasing business. The news came as a surprise and huge disappointment to many of you. Zziplex has been a giant of the rod building world for as long as most of us can remember and I can think of few other tackle manufacturers and brands in sea angling which have developed such a strong fondness and reputation for quality and performance. It will be sorely missed. We will bring you more on this story in the next issue.

In the meantime, enjoy the summer and this issue. I hope it inspires you to try something, or somewhere, new.

Until next month, tight lines.

David

HOW TO CONTACT US: EDITORIAL

sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk

Editor

David Mitchell



Contributing Editor

Dave Lewis,

Email: david.lewis21@hotmail.com

Design

Mark Hyde



Thanks to all our contributors in this issue: Ben Bassett, Ian Bowell, Tony Burman, Chris Clark, Will Cooper, Kevin Crowley, Henry Gilbey, John Holden, Jeff Jeeves, Chris Kennedy, Dave Lewis, James Madsen, Mike Millman, Rob Pope, John Pritchard, Dave Roberts, Simon Smith, Andy Steer, Mike Thrussell

Write to: Sea Angler, Kelsey Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court, Yalding Hill, Yalding, Maidstone, Kent, ME18 6AL.

ADVERTISING

Talk Media Sales (TMS)

David Lerpiniere, tel: 01732 445326

Email: david@talkmediasales.co.uk

Advert production: Nick Bond, tel: 01732 441281

Email: Nick.bond@talkmediasales.co.uk

CLASSIFIEDS Tel: 0906 802 0279

(premium rate line, operated by Talk Media Sales on behalf of Kelsey Publishing Ltd. Calls cost 65p per minute from a BT landline; other networks and mobiles may vary. Lines open Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm). Email: seaangler@kelseyclassifieds.co.uk

MARKETING

Subscription Marketing Director: Gill Lambert

Retail Director: Steve Brown

Senior Subs Marketing Manager: Nick McIntosh

Affiliate Marketing: Kate Chamberlain

PRODUCTION

Print production/distribution liaison manager:

Georgina Harris, email: georgina.harris@kelsey.co.uk

Print production controller:

Hayley Brown, email: hayley.brown@kelsey.co.uk

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MANAGEMENT

Chief Executive: Steve Wright

Chief Operating Officer: Phil Weeden

Publishing Director: Oswin Grady

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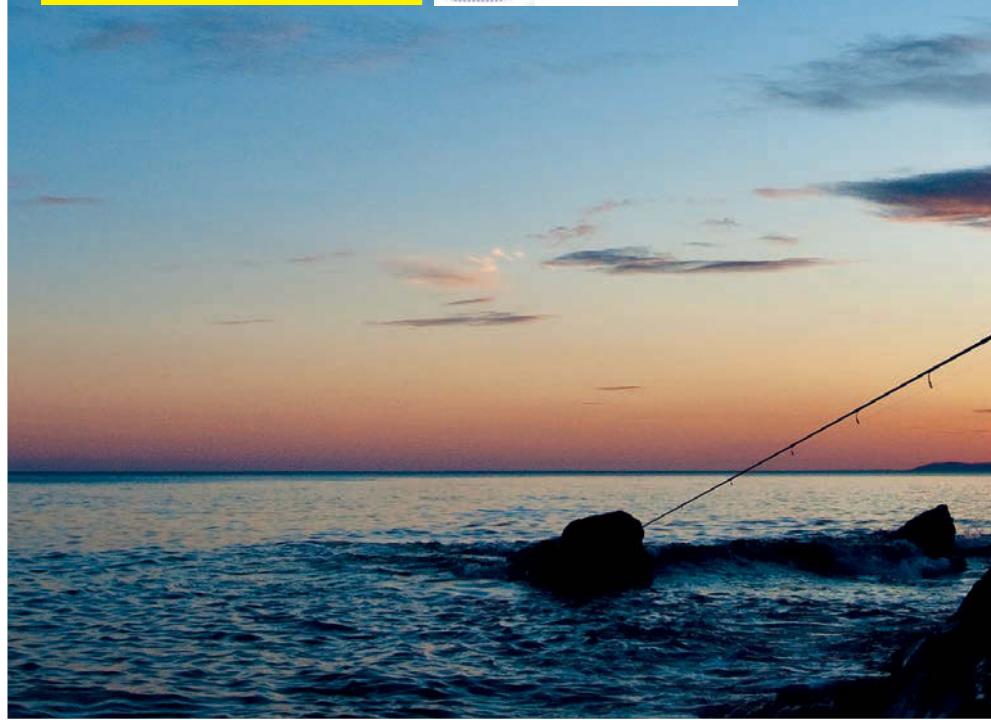
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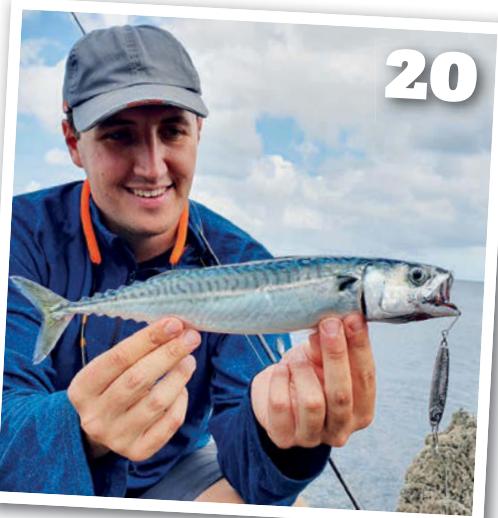
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THE BIG PICTURE

Sea Angler

A Couch's bream caught on Sark, one of the species of summer visitors to the South West





THE BIG INTERVIEW

Former Olympic athlete and coarse angling personality, Dean Macey, tells Sea Angler how he recently got bitten by the sea angling bug and why it's given all his fishing a new lease of life

Not to get too political, but I don't agree with fishing the rivers right now, so for the first couple of weeks of the river season I'm always a bit lost about what to do.

A few bank holidays ago I took a couple of carp angling pals for a bike ride around Canvey Island, where I live, and as we rode past the sea one of them said, "Oh, I went fishing there once and caught a couple of bass. We were using heavy rods like broom handles and only fishing 20 yards out off the rocks".

A couple of days later we were trying to go coarse fishing but it was super busy everywhere

we went so I said, "I could get my barbel gear and if you think there's a chance of catching a fish why don't we have a go fishing off the sea wall and see what happens".

We went to the local tackle shop, bought some ragworm and ended up catching six bass. They weren't big but for the first time in my life, after living on an island for 45 years and not being interested in what's been underneath my nose, sea angling got hold of me.

I always associated sea fishing with big rods and little fish and I remember stories from my school days about dredging in the Thames Estuary that killed all the fishing. My brothers-in-law all fish

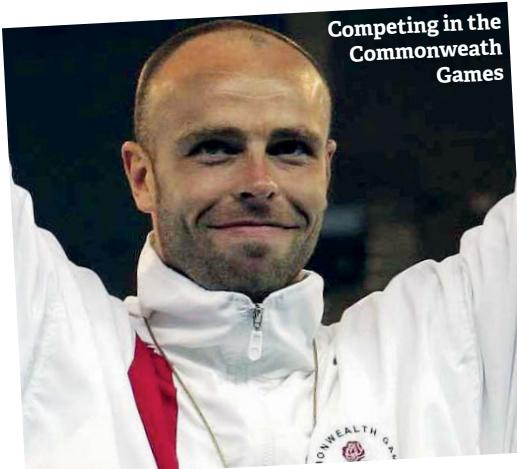
from the island and from boats, but I'm not really a big boat lover so it never appealed to me.

I've got a 35g lure rod I use for perch fishing (damn, have I spent some serious money on lures!) and a 2lb barbel rod that I use and can take 4oz of lead if I need it. They are the two rods that I stick on my bike. I'm literally barbel fishing for bass. ▶





SHORE ANGLER



I don't think I've blanked yet and I'm now fishing further afield than just the island. Aside from bass I've had a couple of thornbacks, a couple of flatties – I don't know what species they were. I've found mullet in probably the most difficult scenarios. I've done all my research but not only am I targeting very spooky fish, but fish that aren't in front of me for more than two minutes. I've had a couple of goes using lures and bait and had a few follows using a fluorocarbon hooklength on the back of the lures baited with a little bit of ragworm.

I'm learning a lot of what I call blood lessons. My mate said "don't go fishing after a storm because it doesn't fish very well". I've learnt that. "Don't go fishing on a big easterly". I've learnt that too. I'm learning different marks, different tides, when the marks start fishing and when they switch off.

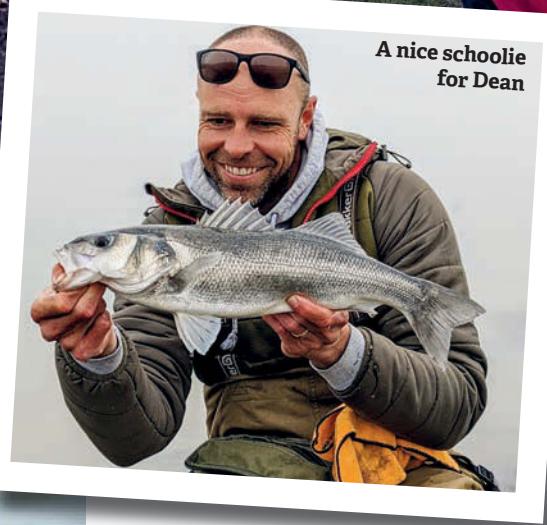
It's just like when I started fishing as a kid on the rivers and the lakes. I'm learning every bit of information this year and I'm making all the mistakes now, fishing as often as I possibly can so I get them out of the way so that when I do find the big 'un I'm ready. I've had a couple of bass pushing 4lb so I've done alright but I need to get the thrill of the bites out of my system – I'm addicted to them. Some of the bites from the little schoolies are so dramatic!



Fishing the river
Crouch in Essex



Sea fishing
has put the
spark back
in all Dean's
fishing



FREEDOM

If we go up to the River Crouch we take our bikes and just ride until we don't see anyone. Fishing is very popular again at the moment but there comes a time when you don't want to be fishing a swim 20 yards away from a complete stranger. You want your own bit of peace, isolation, space, time and freedom.

The best thing about sea fishing it is that it's given me a spark back for fishing. All of my fishing is better because I'm excited about one element of it. I caught four PBs this winter – perch, barbel, grayling and arctic char – but it was all a bit "samey" and I really wasn't enjoying my fishing that much.

Then came the spring and I started bass fishing and realised that sea fishing was a whole new world to me because now I know I can do it on light gear, go off on my mountain bike and fish for four hours – it's exactly what I used to do as a kid. The fact that I've got another string to my fishing bow has given my fishing a boost.

I've just taken delivery of my new two-man fishing kayak that my wife wanted – it just happens to have four rod holders on it too. Whether that five, six or seven-pound bass takes me two or three years, I don't care. This is my life now.

LURES

I've had a couple of bass on Momo surface lures. The majority of the better bass I've had have been on the Savage Gear weedless minnows with the three-gram belly weighted hooks. I've got a mix of everything – some recommended to me, some I thought would work well and others that I researched online.

I love fishing night tides but it messes with my day's work the next day. When you are carp fishing you can go to bed in your bivvy and go to sleep if nothing's happening. When you're fishing a night tide, you're up, awake and fishing all the time.

I'm excited because I've lived near the sea all my life and I've trained on the beach, along the sea wall and on the steps three days a week for the last 30 years. Now when I go for a run or I'm riding my bike with my wife I'm looking at the sea in a completely different way – everything is a recce for my next fishing session.

TIMING

It's come along at the perfect time. None of the filming, presenting and sponsorship within fishing that I've had over the years has ever been by design – it's all just come along at the right time and it's the same with sea fishing. It's given me so many more targets that I didn't have four months ago and it's rejuvenated all my fishing.

I will always be thankful for track & field and fishing because if it wasn't for them I honestly don't know what I would have done with my life, and I'll always be thankful for sea fishing because it's given my coarse fishing the kick up the backside that it needed.

We all go through peaks and troughs when we can't be bothered but this trough has been a little bit longer than usual and sea fishing has helped to snap me right out of it. It's given my fishing a new lease of life. ■



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PICTURE PERFECT

In the first part of a new series on how to improve your photography skills Henry Gilbey asks you to slow down and think



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Take a bit of time to consider how to make your photos as dramatic as possible



A little bit of effort
and thought can
lead to a much more
interesting photo



It was fishing that really got me into photography many years ago, and it's photography which continues to fascinate me just as much as fishing. The two things are completely inseparable in my world, and while I accept that this may not be the case for you, judging by the sheer numbers of fishing related photos I see on social media, or being submitted to a magazine like Sea Angler, I would guess that the majority of you here enjoy taking photos of your fishing. This might be the fish you catch, a friend of yours fishing, some of the fishing tackle you are using or simply the location where you are fishing because it looks so good.

In this new series we are going to look at the photography of fishing and work out how we might all take better photos which are more interesting and enjoyable to look at and share. At the end of the day, you want other anglers to see your photos, but how do we get somebody to stop scrolling through like crazy and instead really sit up and take notice of a particular photo you have taken?

STOP & THINK

What is the single thing that comes across to me from nearly all the fishing related photos I see? If we momentarily forget about the technical aspects of photography then the single thing which nearly always springs to mind when I see most fishing related photos is this – that with

a small amount of thought and vision virtually every single photo could be so much better.

We have never had it so easy when it comes to being able to record the world around us via our mobile phones especially, but just because we can take more photos so easily doesn't automatically mean that those photos are going to be any better than they were during the days of film when you had to take unexposed rolls of film into a physical shop and wait a few days until you could go in and pick up your envelope of developed photos.

If this sounds like an alternate universe to you then you are probably not old enough to remember those (olden) days. These days we have amazingly competent cameras in our pockets and we can do a lot more with them, and indeed proper camera gear, if we stop and think.

Without getting yourself arrested for looking at people, the next time you are out and about watch people when they are taking photos of something. It's most likely going to be with a mobile phone because virtually everybody has one with at least a half-decent camera on it, but even if you see people out and about with real camera gear, I bet that nearly every single person simply stands there and shoots a bunch of photos. Let's forget all about focusing and composition and exposure for the moment and instead concentrate on what nearly everybody does without even realising it, which in turn so often makes for photographs which simply don't grab us very much when we look at them. There is a reason for this. ►

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What are we most used to seeing when we look through our eyes? The world at our eye-level, which in turn is why when the majority of photos are shot at eye-level we sometimes don't engage with them a huge amount unless there is something exciting going on in the photo. By no means am I saying that you can't take arresting looking photos from the natural level of your eyes, rather that far too many people simply whip their phone out and record what they see – which in turn can often make for a photo which often doesn't stop our eyes and say 'spend a bit more time looking at me'.

I passionately believe that fishing photography is so much about creativity, but to be creative requires a bit of thought. If I am trying to take a clinical photograph of, say, a building because I want to remember the colours of the stained-glass windows then by all means stand there and try to record only what you are seeing when you stand there at your natural height, but let's all decide here that we want to make fishing look as good as possible. ▶

Changing the level from which you take the photo can make a huge difference



Take your phone
and experiment
taking the same
photo from
different angles



TRY THIS TODAY

We will get onto camera gear and all that sort of stuff at a later date, but for now let's try something. When you are next out there fishing with a mate and you want to take a photo of them if they are standing in an interesting looking spot or the light is particularly good, try this for me – take three photos from the same spot.

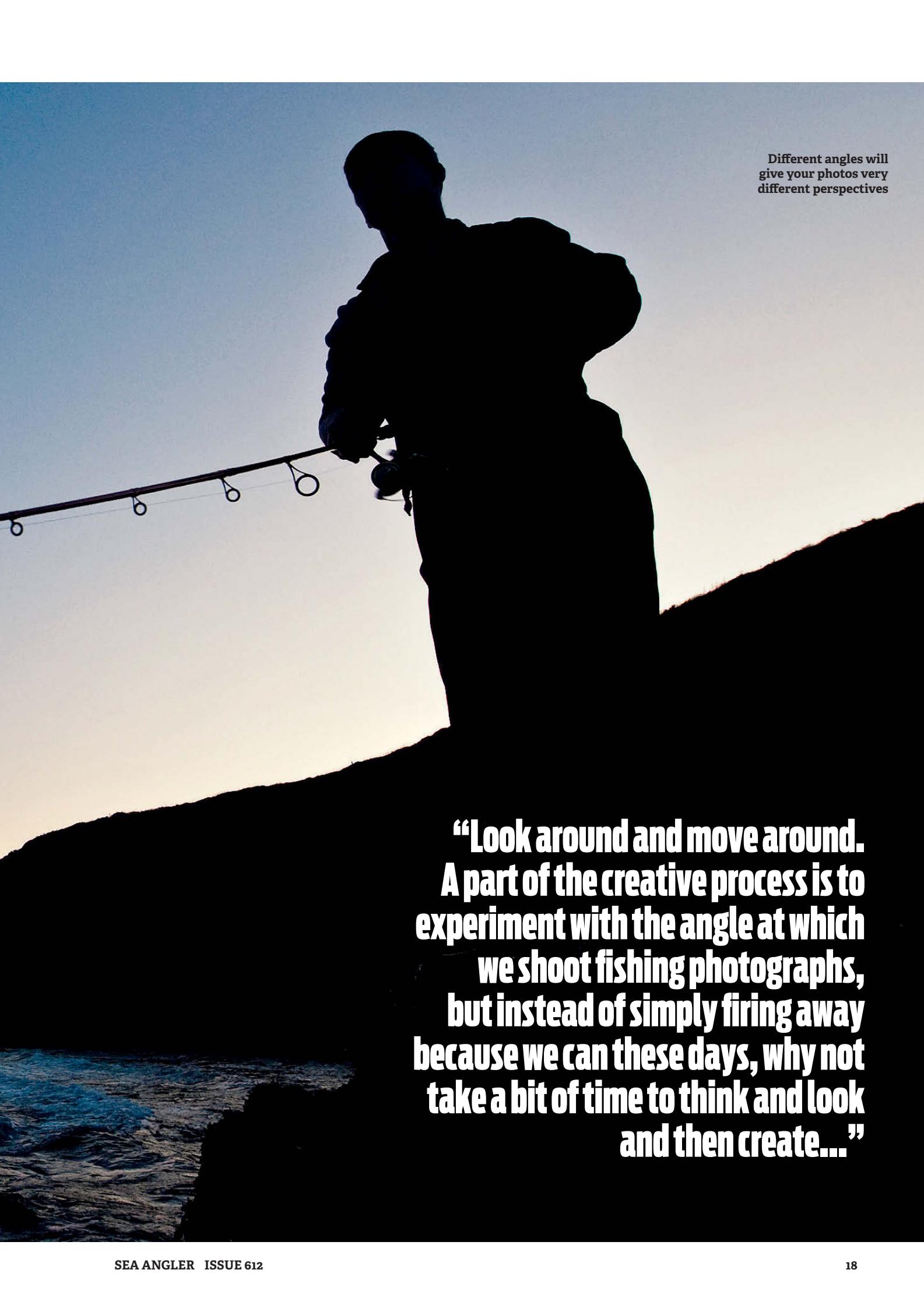
For the first one please shoot, as most people do, and simply raise your mobile phone or camera up to the level of your eyes and take a

photo. For the next photo try raising the phone or camera above your head or stand on a rock or bench and shoot the same scene but now you are at a slight 'look down' angle. For the last photo I want you to either lie down on the ground or at least kneel down, and fire away. Now scroll through the three photographs and try to really concentrate on which photo 'stops' you as you are looking through. I bet you it isn't the first photo where you simply shot from the level of your eyes.

Already then we are doing something a bit different by simply changing the angle and

therefore perspective of the photograph, but what did you also do which you can often very simply change to produce a more interesting end result? You took the photo from where you thought of the photo, but what is to say that where you took the photo from was the most interesting way to shoot it? Why simply stand or lie down when there is quite likely a more creative place to shoot the photo from?

These days it's almost that because we have mobile phones with cameras we simply fire away ▶

A high-contrast silhouette of a person fishing from a rocky shore. The person is seen from the side, facing right, holding a fishing rod. The background is a bright, glowing sky transitioning from blue to orange and yellow, with dark silhouettes of hills or mountains in the distance.

Different angles will
give your photos very
different perspectives

**“Look around and move around.
A part of the creative process is to
experiment with the angle at which
we shoot fishing photographs,
but instead of simply firing away
because we can these days, why not
take a bit of time to think and look
and then create...”**

Taken at eye level this photo wouldn't be nearly as dramatic



with little thought of the end result, indeed just the other day my eldest girl whipped out her mobile phone (which dad/me pays for!) and started shooting what I could tell were going to be some incredibly boring photographs of a lake. It was actually a pretty lake in some fairly flat light but which with a bit of thought could have been photographed in at least a relatively interesting way, yet she took some photos at eye-level. I then asked her why she was taking such boring photos when there was also very little chance she would ever look at those photos ever again, let alone share them with her friends. The last thing my daughter wants to do is listen to dad banging on about how with a tiny bit of thought and effort she could have taken much better photos of that lake, but the experience

comes back to what we are talking about here.

Look around and move around. For sure, a part of the creative process is to experiment with the angle at which we shoot fishing photographs, but instead of simply firing away because we can these days, why not take a bit of time to think and look and then create. If you see something interesting that you want to photograph, I would hazard a guess that you could make the end result more interesting if you moved around and tried different angles, which of course we can easily do these days because we aren't ripping through rolls of film and then having to pay to have them developed. I love digital photography by the way; indeed, I had the first ever digital front cover for this very magazine, but just because shooting lots of

photos is so easy these days doesn't make the art of photography any less important if you want to create better photographs.

Now I actually shoot very few fishing photos on my mobile phone, but this is mainly for technical reasons which I won't bore you with quite yet. I always carry at least one camera body and a lens or multiple lenses with me when I go fishing so my creative choices are far greater than just using a mobile phone, but at the end of the day it changes nothing. Take a bit of time, think about what you see in front of you, don't be in a hurry to just shoot and dump photos on a camera roll, and let's work on shooting more interesting and dramatic photos which make this sport we all love look as impressive as possible and which make for great memories. ■



SHORE ANGLER



Words and
Photography
WILL COOPER



THE MIGHTY MACKEREL

How one of Britain's most undervalued sporting species can provide some superb summer sport

During the summer months, thousands of anglers will adorn the coastline around the UK, blasting out sets of feathers on heavy rods to catch mackerel. While this is a very effective technique for catching large quantities, wielding a beachcaster for hours on end is tiring and will provide little sport. However, by scaling down the tackle you use, a mackerel can put a serious bend in your rod.

As a relatively easy-to-catch species, often available in vast numbers, mackerel are overlooked by many anglers and only targeted by those who either want them to eat or use as bait. However, for me, mackerel can provide Britain's equivalent to tuna fishing, albeit slightly scaled-down. But, if mackerel were much harder to catch, surely they would be one of the most prized fish in our waters?

The mackerel is indeed a close relative of the tuna, both being members of the Scombridae family. Mackerel are a highly migratory species, moving north during the winter and then returning back along many of our shores

during summer. Although they can be caught throughout the year in some parts of the UK, particularly the southwest, their numbers peak from June until August.

During these months, mackerel often congregate in shoals up to 20 miles long to spawn, attracted close to shore by the bountiful supply of baitfish. This often results in the species being relatively easy to catch, making them an ideal target species for locals and holidaymakers alike. However, you shouldn't disregard the species, as catching specimen mackerel of around the 2lb mark requires skill and can provide a serious fight on light gear.

TACKLE

For the majority of summer mackerel fishing, I recommend a rod that can comfortably cast lures below 10 or 15 grams. For example, I use a Greys 100 twin tip LRF 2-12g paired with a Shimano Stradic 2500 HG FL. This light setup provides some great sport even when catching the smallest of mackerel, but is still powerful enough to guide a mackerel away from any snag or rough ground.

However, if the fish are at distance, there are not large quantities of mackerel about or the weather conditions don't permit a lighter setup, I use my HTO Nebula Travel 9-35g with a Penn Slammer IV 2500. Having a slightly heavier setup can be very beneficial as it still provides great sport, but allows you to fish at much greater distances and can therefore cover more water.

Both the reels that I use are loaded with 20lb Suffix X8 braid, on to which I tie a 2-4ft section of 20lb suffix fluorocarbon via an FG knot. For me, braid is an absolute must due to the direct contact you get with the lure. Even the biggest mackerel can give quite shy bites, but braid will allow you to feel these so that you can slow down your retrieve in order to induce a proper take.

Although no mackerel is going to break this line, it is very useful should you hook a bonus bass or pollack, a not uncommon occurrence when fishing for mackerel. Instead of tying the lure directly to the fluorocarbon, I use a breakaway mini snap to allow lures to be changed quickly and easily. ▶





The casting distance and durability of metal lures makes them ideal

LURES

All the lures I use for mackerel are small metals. Although mackerel can be caught on other styles of lures such as soft plastics, the casting distance and durability that metal provides makes them a winner for me. The lures that I use on my light setup generally weigh below 15 grams, but with my slightly heavier rod I can cast lures up to 30 grams.

On all my metals that come rigged with a treble, I replace it with a Mustad Kajju size 2 single hook. They have a really good hook-up ratio and hook the fishing nicely in the corner of the mouth, making them easier to release if you wish. I recommend crushing the barbs on your single hooks. This means that when I catch a mackerel that I wish to return, I simply grab the leader just above the fish, tuck the rod under my arm, grab the hook by the shank and turn it upside down whilst holding the fish above the water.

This allows me to release the fish without coming into contact with it. Some people say that if you touch a mackerel it will die, but I believe that as long as you use wet hands and release it as soon as possible, mackerel will swim back strongly. Another benefit of using singles is that they are a lot less likely to snag if they come into contact with rough ground. This can be a particular benefit when targeting the larger mackerel which typically reside closer to the seabed.

TACTICS

If casting distance isn't an issue (as the mackerel are close in), I recommend using the lightest lure that still allows you to feel in contact at all times. Staying in contact with your lure is of vital importance from the moment your lure hits the water. This can be achieved by using your index finger to 'feather' the line at the end of your cast, so a belly of slack line isn't created. Very often, the mackerel will take the lure on the drop before you have reeled in any line, which you can easily feel as a strong tap when you have direct contact with your lure. I'm not sure why mackerel take lures on the drop so often, but it may

be due to the lure looking more like a dying baitfish rather than a live one. Lighter lures also increase the drop time, giving the mackerel more time to see and take the lure.

Alternatively, you can increase the drop time by using slow jigs. These lures tend to have a thinner and flatter profile compared to a traditional jig, allowing them to flutter much more slowly through the water. I fish these lures by feeling the lure down to the bottom on a tight line and then slowly winding in for a few turns of the handle. This is followed by a firm lift of the rod and then letting the lure fall for a few seconds. By repeating this pattern, you can fish through the water column, giving any passing mackerel plenty of time to see your lure and allowing you to see what depth the fish are at. Some of my favourite slow jigs are the Majorcraft Jigpara series.

TARGETING SPECIMENS

With the UK shore-caught record mackerel reaching nearly 6lb, any fish of half this size would be a truly memorable one for any angler, and by adjusting how and when you fish, it is possible to target these larger mackerel.

I often find that the hardest time to target specimen mackerel is when shoals are concentrated in huge numbers. This is because it is often shoal fish that are most aggressive and will take your lure before a larger fish has had an opportunity. However, fishing close to the seabed can often pick out the bigger fish which reside nearer the bottom of the shoal. This can be made easier with the use of slow jigs, which both attract bigger fish due to their larger profile and increase the time spent at the appropriate depth. However, this is not always the case, as I have caught some of my biggest mackerel on sets of sabikis.

Therefore, it is often worth experimenting on the day, as what may have worked one day may not be the right approach on another. Unlike many species, large mackerel can be caught in a variety of weather conditions, from blazing sunshine to wind and rain. However, conditions may influence what lure style is best on the day – natural, flashy silver or even bright pink.

Whether you are targeting specimen mackerel or catching larger numbers for bait, it is perhaps worth mentioning that we shouldn't abuse a species just because they are easy to catch. Of course, it is perfectly acceptable to kill mackerel if we have a use for them, as long as they are above the minimum landing size. However, it is important to dispatch them humanely, and I carry a 'priest' for that purpose.

But when you have sufficient, or if you are just fishing for sport, try and release fish safely. I have seen bags of dead fish dumped in rubbish bins on harbour walls, presumably by people who only wanted to brag about how many they caught. It is a sad spectacle.

TIDES

Another factor that can increase your success when targeting specimen mackerel is understanding how currents move around certain marks according to the size and the

state of the tide. Currents can often concentrate fish due to the accumulation of baitfish along the crease, where the edge of the current meets slack water. This is something that is often forgotten in sea fishing but can hugely influence results.

For example, on one of my local headlands, the eastern side fishes very well on a spring ebb as a strong current passes close to shore and heads out to sea. On the other hand, just 50 yards away on the western side, there is no such current, and the fishing here is much less fruitful.

In some instances, currents can be at your maximum casting range with a light setup, and therefore having a slightly heavier setup may allow you to reach these areas. Understanding these patterns will not only improve your success when targeting mackerel, but many other species as well. However, in general, the time that I target mackerel most frequently is the two hours after high tide. This is because there is plenty of depth to hold the mackerel (which is very beneficial when there aren't many about), and currents are building in strength.

LOCATION

Throughout the summer, mackerel can be caught from a huge variety of locations. In previous years, I have caught them in just a few feet of water far up an estuary whilst targeting bass. However, the best locations in which to target mackerel are often those that give easy access to deep water. These areas often hold large numbers of sandeel close to shore which attract the mackerel, reducing the casting distance you need to catch fish and allowing you to use a lighter setup. Furthermore, these deeper areas often hold the larger specimens.

Some of the most popular locations to reach deep water are often situated around harbours, due to their easy accessibility and comfy fishing platform. On the other hand, if you wish to get away from the crowds, finding your own rock mark can often lead to more peaceful and varied fishing. In order to find these locations, I use the invaluable resources of Google Maps (satellite mode) and the Navionics web app. By combining these two sources of information, you can gain a huge amount of knowledge about a potential fishing spot: accessibility, depths and the ground you'll be fishing over.

However, one of the most valuable resources can just be using your eyes on the day. Look around for bird activity. Seagulls will congregate to feed on sandeels that are being chased to the surface by mackerel. So you may set off with firm plans to fish a particular spot, but when you get there, be prepared to tear up your plans and go where the birds are. Following signs such as these can really improve your success when targeting mackerel as well as other species. ■



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A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S BREAM

Chris Kennedy uses patience and experience to crack the code for targeting one of the tastiest, and most impressive, summer visitors to the UK – the Couch's bream



If I had to get into the conversation about which summer species I like to catch the most, I'd get into a list of very subjective criteria that probably wouldn't mean a whole lot to most people out there.

We're very fortunate in the UK that this influx of fish through the warmer months gives us an incredible variety of species to target. People who inhabit places like Dorset, Devon, Cornwall and the Channel Islands are luckier still; their geographical locations cause some rarer species to frequent their shores.

Black bream are a beautiful species to catch with the sun warming your face. I can remember being a child in the 1980s sitting on the rocks with my father, enjoying the afternoon sun and watching him catch them cast after cast, and by teatime we'd all be tucking into them on the BBQ. At dawn, dad occasionally had red bream from Herm Island's Belvoir Bay, a truly fantastic venue in summer.

I became pretty good at catching them as I grew older, finding black bream and some gilthead bream on Herm and in Poole Harbour. I'd always get a buzz seeing one of the rarer types. The bream I found most captivating in appearance is the Couch's bream with its fiery reds, pinks, golden eyes and majestic blue flourishes that look almost hand-painted by an artist. As soon I arrived on the island of Sark, nine miles from the larger island of Guernsey and 14 miles from Jersey, I began trying to target the less common Couch's. We have black bream, red bream, pandora bream, banded bream, gilthead bream, Couch's bream and white bream in our waters. We are spoilt, but some are exceedingly rare.

TRIAL & ERROR

After starting to live out here, I realised one of the more challenging things was getting through the mass of black bream to find the colourful Couch's. You'd need a lot of patience, and you'd get through tons of bait just to see one. As I refined my methods and experimented with venues, I began to find some pretty reliable spots to winkle out a few of these beautiful red and pink bream.

Sea angling is a process; we can fish for a lifetime and always be learning; experience is everything, and what works in one spot may be virtually useless in the next. As I honed my skills, I worked out that small metal jigs were not only the most effective way to catch the resplendent Couch's but, if you used an LRF or lure rod, you'd have some exhilarating sport in daylight.

TACTICS

My chosen lure or jig for this species is the Remen Atomsilda 7g or 12g or, alternatively, bright pink jelly worms with an 8g ball head if conditions are still enough. For this article, I used the Atomsilda metal jigs exclusively; the images are from one evening session. The jigs themselves are slow jigs. I am casting into as little as 3m of water but as much as 12-13m at times. The slow action means they sort of flutter toward

The fiery reds and oranges of the Couch's are stunning

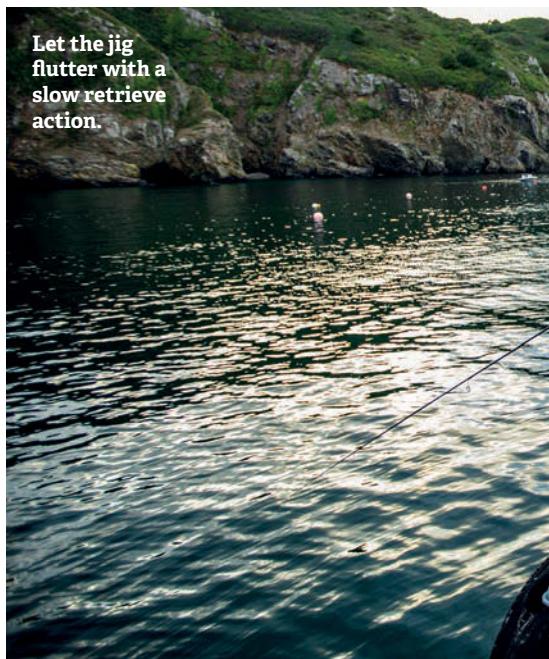


the bottom and dart, mimicking an injured fish. You can also slow retrieve them just above the weed and reef for good effect. The water here is crystal clear; viewing it in a glass or bucket is entirely indistinguishable from bottled water; the fish have excellent visibility, even at decent depths. While bream do pick up scent trail well, in this circumstance, they are sight feeders, and I would conclude that they are adept at hunting small sandeels, which are plentiful in the rich and diverse waters of the Channel Islands.

Sea Angler set me a bit of a challenge; to write an article about Couch's at quite short notice, the week I had to do it suddenly dwindled down to just one evening after some social engagements and a quick bout of Covid-19. I do like a bit of pressure on my shoulders and the evening I had in store was perfect, almost flat calm conditions, a flooding tide or 8.5 plus metres, and low winds.

I gathered a bunch of metals, a spool of fluorocarbon leader, a hand towel and a knife, as well as a couple of my favourite light rods and reels for the job. Before seeing the water, I wasn't certain that it would be calm enough to go with

Let the jig flutter with a slow retrieve action.





“Sea angling is a process; we can fish for a lifetime and always be learning; experience is everything, and what works in one spot may be virtually useless in the next”



SHORE ANGLER





“A short while later, I had a screaming take peeling line off the drag; a gorgeous chunky mackerel was zig-zagging in front of me, its vivid green striped patterns catching my eye”

the LRF tackle, and I always like to take two rods and have them both set-up, even though I only fish one at a time. Optimally, if you use lighter jigs like 7g, you need an LRF rod, and my Daiwa Gekkabijin casts 1-8g. My Century Weapon Jr lure rod from the USA will cast a lot heavier jigs, it's much more suited to bass and pollock fishing, but it's resilient enough to fish with if it's windier or in a disturbed sea. I use 11lb or 15lb Daiwa J-Braid Grand, which is ultra-thin, meaning very little wind or tidal drag on the line. I tend to go a little heavy with 20lb fluorocarbon as a leader, as sometimes jigs can get stuck, mainly when pollock strike and take you into the structure; it can save you losing lures by having a bit more rubbing strength.

GOOD START

I was delighted to see the tranquil view while exiting the tunnel to Maseline Harbour, though the wind was a little brisk initially. My friend Sam was fishing away on the end of the breakwater, using multiple rods and methods. I greeted him and asked how he was getting on; nothing so far. I had barely had three casts when I was already into my first fish, and it felt like a bream, hammering away on the end of my line. Sure enough, I could see the pinkish tinge of a Couch's bream rising in the



water column, darting left and right, this was a fantastic start if landed. Safely in the net, it was photographed and released moments later. I like to get them back rapidly as they nearly always survive that way.

My confidence was up, just what I needed with three hours until high and coinciding more or less with darkness, when my jigs would be obsolete, and the prime photography light would also be gone. I was in a race against time but very happy to be back out fishing after a bit of a

break and a boring, uncomfortable time with Covid. It makes you realise that if we have our health, we have everything; being outdoors has become even more important to me during these past two years. Many of my good angling friends would share these sentiments.

I then hooked two more fiery-looking Couch's in quick succession, with one being a better size. They fight so hard, pound for pound, my 1-8g rod was bent double with the fish boring deep toward the kelp. Sam, next to

The best of
the evening's
session



me, was surprised I was three fish up, and he was yet to connect with anything. He had ragworms and fish strip, which really is a testament to how well the metal jigs work in this clear water.

Next up, I managed to hook some tiny pollock, I mean baitfish sized, my jigs were half the length of them; there are tons of them close to the harbour wall; it's like a nursery for them. It's hard to know if they are attacking the jig to eat or if it's territorial. A short while later, I had a screaming take peeling line off the drag; a gorgeous chunky mackerel was zig-zagging in front of me, its vivid green striped patterns catching my eye. It wasn't nearly ready when it first reached the edge of the net and went on two more runs before I finally managed to get it into the custom drop-net. I thought to myself, "another one of those and that'll be dinner".

HECTIC ACTION

The fishing really picked up; there was barely a drop during this period where something didn't attack my jig. It was so exciting; my addiction to this sport, hobby or pastime we all love was alive and well, adrenaline pumping. Every cast I was now hooking mackerel, and I was soon up to six of them, and I enjoyed the fight from every single one. I then had a take which felt a bit different, and a lovely goldfish-coloured ballan wrasse kited up through the water column, species number four of the session.

"I paused and thought about how lucky I had been; now on five Couch's, three pollock, six mackerel and one ballan wrasse. The session had exceeded all expectations"



The mackerel then went quiet after Sam had a few also while I was busy photographing the fish. As soon as I recast, I was back into more Couch's, each one a spectacle to look at in the net, with one being a very distinct red, almost like a soldierfish or snapper you might see in the southern Hemisphere.

The sun then dipped behind the ridge, and the sky filled with magnificent colours, like something from an oil painting. I paused and thought about how lucky I had been; now on five Couch's, three pollock, six mackerel and one ballan wrasse. The session had exceeded all expectations, and it had been crowned off with this incredible sky; fishing doesn't get much

better on light gear. I fished on a little and half expected one decent pollock, not the fry variety, but it never came. I did pick up one last Couch's to Sam's amusement. As I said, I don't usually get them around dusk, but this little one obliged.

I am writing this article sat on a train between Manchester airport and Manchester Piccadilly. Gazing with empty eyes out of the window, the sky is grey, and all I can think about is being back on the end of that harbour, casting another lure into that gin-clear saltwater, hoping for the excitement that a decent fish will bring. We have lots of chores and responsibilities in life, stuff that we must do, but the fishing makes me feel most alive and keeps my mind wondering. ■

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before the light
goes and the
bites dry up





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BLACKERS

Chris Clark recommends this hidden Dorset wrasse mark along the Purbeck coastline

Being a world heritage site with spectacular towering rugged cliffs and stunning scenery draws me back time after time to marks along the Purbeck coastline; it truly is a magical location. There are a number of well documented marks which have relatively easy access such as Dancing Ledge, Winspit and Seacombe, but the majority of other marks are lofty perches not really suitable for float or lure fishing.

For the adventurous there are a few other hidden gems which allow fishing at sea level although access is often difficult and should only be approached with an experienced guide. During mid August the adrenalin was certainly flowing as I was heading to Blackers; a marked tucked away which is rarely visited by anglers and for good reason.

It is a venue that I had fished previously but joining me for the trip was Scott Titt. Apart from being a former chairman of the Swanage & District Angling Club he was also, for a number of years, the president of the British Mountaineering Council and is normally found dangling from lofty perches along the Purbecks.

GETTING THERE

Apart from locating Blackers and descending down into the old quarry, actually getting there is something of an assault course with a mile-and-a-half hike from the parking location - on the return it is a 350ft uphill slog. This is one venue I never attempt to fish until at least July to give the numerous nesting birds in the surrounding cliffs some peace to rear their chicks. Late summer and early autumn are also by far the most productive months along this stretch.

On this occasion Scott scampered down the rock face into the old quarry like a mountain goat while I was far more cautious lowering my rucksack down with a rope before making the decent.

I am not the greatest fan of fishing night sessions from such marks but those who do venture out after dark will find huss, conger, three bearded rockling and undulate rays with some good bass coming at dawn and dusk. On this occasion, however, we were having a daylight session mainly targeting the wrasse population. Scott would be bouncing a 1oz lead over the seabed along with a size 4 hook baited with

ragworm while I would mainly be concentrating on the float after an hour or so on the heavy gear as lighter fishing can be extremely rewarding.

TACTICS

For this type of fishing I normally opt for a 35gm Drennan Piker float along with a sliding set-up as the depth would vary from around 12 to 15ft deep. At the business end I used a Kamasan size 4 short shank hook which is well suited for wrasse fishing. They are strong enough to tame even a hefty ballan wrasse. I normally opt for 8lb main line when float fishing with a 2ft stretch of 6lb mono as a hook line. If you get snagged you will lose the hook but not the more expensive float. Ideally, a flood tide is favoured along this stretch, but alas we had arrived on high so would have to settle for the ebb which on occasions can be very patchy.

Scott decided to start on the lower ledges at sea level with his light gear while I just had to have a couple of casts from the higher ledge with the hefty gear and was in for a real surprise. Just as my lead hit the water somehow some lose line got tangled under the spool, which can happen from time to time although it is a real pain. While I quickly took off the spool to sort out the problem I could already feel something really angry tugging on the other end which was certainly not helping to solve the situation. I was like a bag of nerves.

Eventually, after around five minutes, the problem was sorted and I was amazed that the fish on the other end had not bolted into a crevice never to be seen again. Instead a very good size hard fighting ballan wrasse cruised



out into clear water and after a hectic struggle emerged on the surface. It was a stunning looking fish with superb colouration; what a way to start a session.

While my intention was to fish for an hour or so with the heavy gear before going down onto the lower ledge with my float rod this was quickly changed after seeing Scott playing a hard fighting ballan on his light gear. My heavy stuff was rapidly packed away and a few minutes later I was scrambling down to the lower ledge with my light gear. There is something special about watching a float bobbling along the surface before suddenly disappearing into the depths below.

Much to my surprise within five minutes the float shot off at a rate of knots right under my feet in about 12ft of water, the pursuing fight certainly got the old ticker working overtime. Using an old barbel rod which I had spliced in a glass tip it gave me more than a few anxious moments making a number of dives for the kelp beds below but eventually yet another nicely marked ballan wrasse lay at my feet, a few quick pictures and it was gone.

For the next couple of hours the scene was set, both Scott and I sampled some great sport landing a number of really colourful hard fighting ballan wrasse along with a few smaller corkwing wrasse. Seeking them out in the deeper gullies between the throngs of kelp certainly kept you on your toes, the slightest hesitation with the initial bite and the chances are the fish would have dived into the kelp never to be seen again. Considering the light tackle we caught some great fish with a wide range of colouration but all good things had to come to an end before darkness descended.



Chris with a ballan taken on a Piker float

Marks such as Blackers which allow one to fish right on the water's edge are brilliant, far better than hauling a fish up a 50ft cliff but the approach is not for the faint hearted. As previously stated, never attempt to approach Blackers or similar marks along the Purbeck coastline unless you are with a knowledgeable local guide.

Every mark is slightly different with various hazards. A typical example, some think nothing of going down to Half Moon but it gives me the wobbles. Hence I normally give it a wide berth while others would not attempt the climb down to Blackers. A golden rule, never push yourself, if you don't feel comfortable just keep to the easy access marks, your safety is far more important. ■



Scott Titt with another ballan from the kelp



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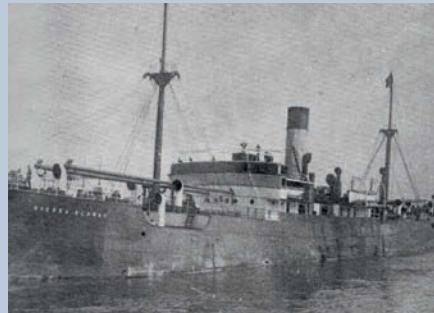
TOP TIP
Travel light and always with a friend
GETTING THERE
Only travel with a local guide





BIGBURY BAY

Mike Millman guides us to Devon's Bigbury Bay where the fascinating history of wartime wrecks offer great fishing for a range of species



The 3,600-ton SS Maine as she was when named Sierra Blanca

Wrecks close to shore have a great deal more to offer than you might think; prime examples being the two that date back to the First and Second World Wars lying in Bigbury Bay at the midway point between Plymouth and Salcombe.

THE PERSIER

The 5,600-ton SS Persier, launched in 1918, was one of the ships at Dunkirk but in 1945 was torpedoed off the Devon coast. Attempts

to beach her and save the cargo failed and she sank in 100ft of water close to the mouth of the Erme Estuary. The torpedo stopped her engines but amazingly they were restarted by a depth charge explosion and then, with the crew taken off, she crept away into the darkness. She was not seen again until in 1969 when divers, acting on a tip-off by fishermen that nets were being caught up on something large, went down a shot line and discovered her standing almost upright and virtually intact on a sandy bottom.

The wreckage was alive with conger and big pollack, species much taken advantage of by anglers in the years that have followed. It has always fished well for pollack despite being close to land and I recall a fish of 13lb taking my drift lined launce. There are times when cod visit the wreck, these coming in from big reefs further offshore.

BURGH ISLAND

Close by is Burgh Island, its south and west facing flanks having deep gullies that are much rated for ballan wrasse that grow on virtually undisturbed. Bass are off the south facing side in the first light of day and I have a note of a 14lb 2oz specimen being caught. Burgh is the setting for the David Suchet film, *Evil Under The Sun*.

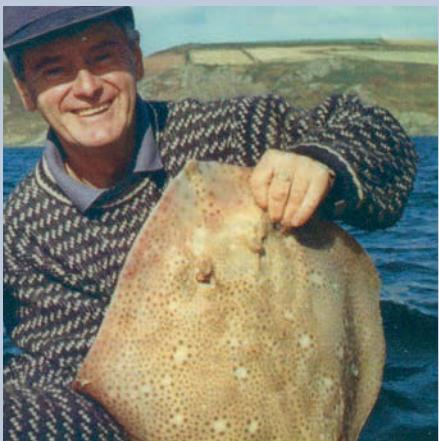
There is also the advantage of the Avon Estuary, good for blonde and small eyed ray. Recently the waters of the bay have begun to yield sizeable spurdog, two being in the 20lb class.

Nearby Bantham has a car park within yards of the beach and is ideal for kayak launching. Between Bolt Tail and Bolt Head is Bolberry Down. The sand and shale seabed below it attracts blonde ray that have been taken from the shore to 26lb 10oz. Boat anglers have reported them to a weight of 35lb 6oz. My rating for the venue is as high as it can go and I have the feeling that over time new boat and shore records for the blonde could be established in this area.

SS MAINE

A mile off Bolt Head is the wreck of the 3,600-ton SS Maine, torpedoed off Berry Head in March 1917. Her Captain tried to get her to the coast but she sank within a mile of it and was upright in 90ft of water when discovered in 1961 by members of the Totnes and Torbay Sub Aqua Clubs who, after much negotiation, purchased the wreckage for £100. It was found that the six-ton propeller was bronze, and this was purchased back by the company who had





Terry Reed shows off a blonde ray taken in Bigbury Bay

manufactured it for £800 leaving the club well in pocket after the salvage dues were paid.

The Maine has always been a natural aquarium and conger are numerous. In the early 1970s I used the Maine as the base for a first in a series of well received VHS videos titled Fishing for Conger and Ray. Surface boil during the bigger tides does much to identify its position. Bolt Head itself has gullies that are a wrasse man's dream and fish in the 8lb class have been taken here.

LAUNCHING

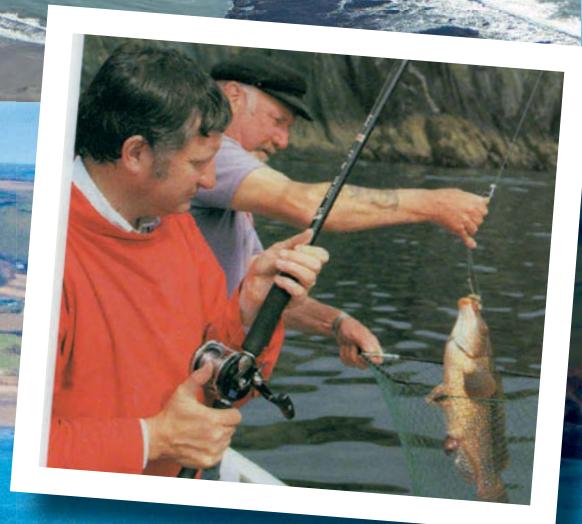
The Maine, Persier and the Burgh Island gullies are perfect for private boats and the well-set-up kayak angler. Kayaks are being developed to a very high standard and bring a new dimension to inshore fishing. Those that have fittings



Looking back more than 50 years and a visit to the Maine that produced conger to 46lb and double figure pollack.

for outriggers, GPS, watertight lockers and more comfortable seating add much to this welcome branch of inshore boat angling. Kayak launching is available at Hope Cove, the holiday area of Challaborough, dominated by caravans, which has two car parks and a slipway.

At Salcombe the slipway is at Batson next to the town's biggest car park. Admiralty Chart 1613 and Ordnance Survey Sheet 202 cover the bay and its coastline. ■



ABOVE: A Burgh Island wrasse of good size against the backdrop of the south facing cliff. Fish to 6lb 7oz have been taken on crabs, worm and limpet baits





PLYMOUTH

Mike Millman shares a lifetime's experience of fishing his home town, this month from Western & Eastern Kings to King Billy and Mount Wise

WESTERN & EASTERN KINGS

Many big conger were caught from the Devil's Point, including the UK record fish of 68½lb, so its closure due to subsidence is a loss. However, 100 yards to the east of the closed off area begins a half mile of opportunity from the Western and Eastern Kings rock shoreline where there is easy access and deep water at your feet. Conger begin to search for food once the light starts to fade and there is not much to choose between a neap flood or ebbing tide in this area.

Another option is the concrete surround of the open-air swimming pool. It does flood out on a big spring tide, but it is a simply a question of moving back with the water. Eastward of the pool is a rugged stretch of shoreline with access points from the walkway above it. Eastern Kings is hard up to the cross-channel ferry terminal and this mark features very wide concrete platforms making for easy fishing.

It is the friendliest conger mark imaginable. Unless it is a particularly cold winter eels are a year-round species. Cod begin to enter the Tamar from Plymouth Sound in late November, but it is January when fish to 30lb are caught although 10lb to 20lb is more likely. Parking in the area has, of late, become a problem as the council has imposed a three-hour free stay but not during the night hours.

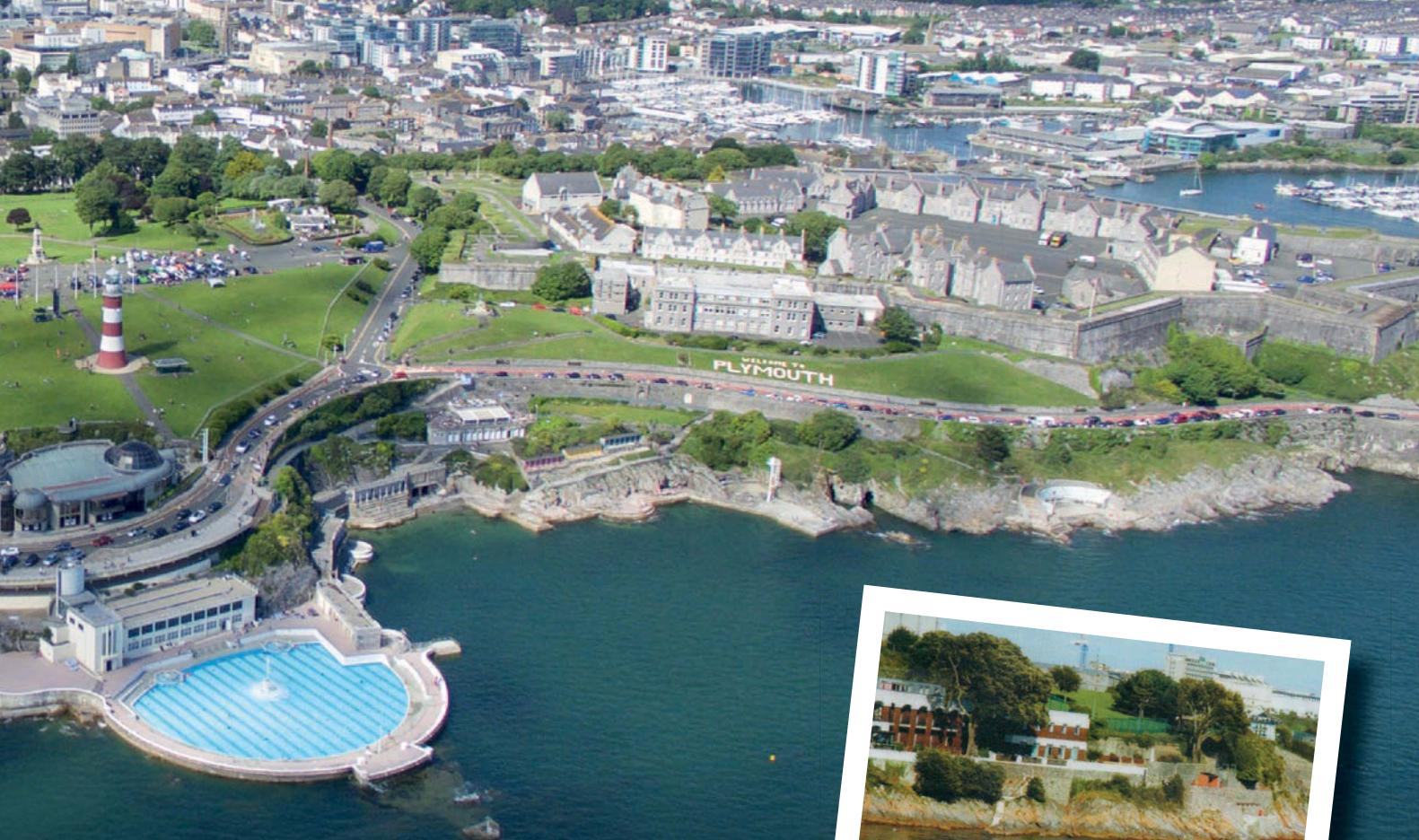
KING BILLY TO MOUNT WISE

The next port of call is Richmond Walk at Stonehouse Bridge where the walkway backs the coast for more than a mile to Mutton Cove. Free parking is usually available in the evening and night hours. A 100m away are the twin jetties of Mutton Cove Breakwaters where eels of 42lb have been reported plus good cod and whiting in the winter. Both the jetties have wide steps and are not completely covered by water, even at the highest spring tide.

On its right is the entrance to boat moorings but on the western side of this is the King Billy Sea wall; However, securing a big eel here is very difficult. To the east of the jetties is the extensive Mount Wise sea wall but it does not have access to the waterline. There was a time during summer evenings when mackerel in their thousands chased Brit. These would be driven into a huge ball into which the voracious mackerel would charge. Now, good mullet fishing is all along the wall but it is best at the extreme end, and to bring them within the float area thorough ground baiting is essential. Flaky fish flesh and bread laced with fish oil is highly



Eastern Kings is easy to fish from with flat concrete platforms at all states of the tide. It's a good and relatively safe mark for junior anglers



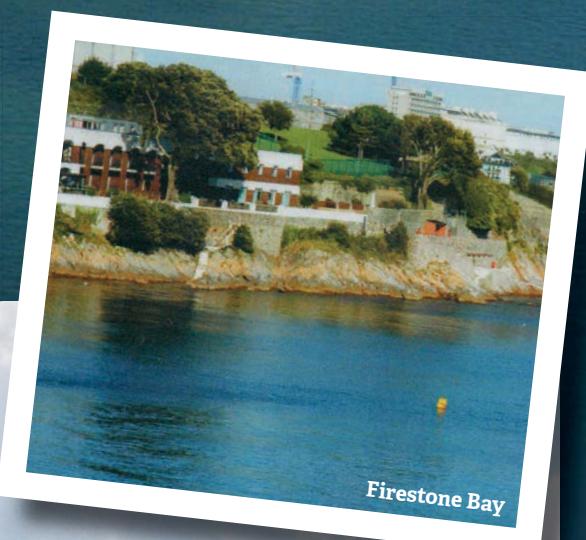
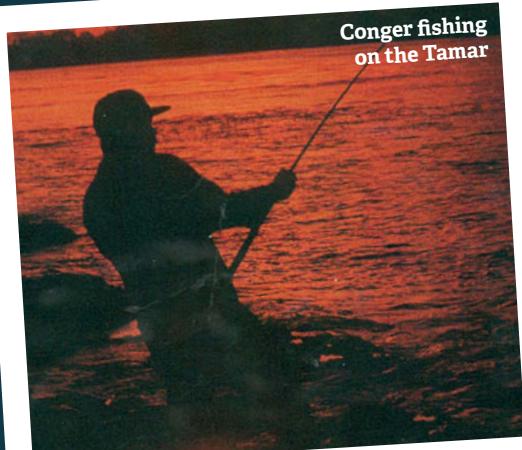
effective. Although not plentiful, thornback rays are available from May on with the night hours giving the best result.

My final mark is the public slipway that has limited parking next to Blagdon's Boatyard, the closest mark to where my tour began at Stonehouse Bridge. It was here in 1977 that a UK record coalfish of 16lb 8.5oz was caught. This was a period when coalies averaging 3-4lb provided top line fishing in the light of a Tilley lamp let down the jetties and harbour walls on a rope.

With the weather warming up it is unlikely the coalfish will return to West Country waters in any number but good pollack fishing is still available. Fishing a baited drop net below the light has a marked affect on the number of prawns you could catch; this is always a deadly bait on a float rig for so many free-swimming species.

As a point of historical interest, on the high ground above the sea wall is the magnificent memorial honouring Plymouth's Captain Robert Falcon Scott and his companion who perished during their return journey from the South Pole in 1912. ■

Fishing from King Billy at Mutton Cove



DOUGHMORE (DO)

Head over the Irish Sea to a venue in County Clare which boasts the Irish bass record fish

On the west coast of County Clare, a Donald Trump-owned golf course backs onto a golden crescent of sand facing the Atlantic. Here, ocean swells from storms far out at sea can bring in monster surf, and when the storm surge is abating, can produce fantastic fishing for bass and flatfish. The beach itself is 2.5km long, with fine soft sand in places, making for a tough walk, so the mid-beach access point is best if planning to fish the northern half of the beach. There are strong currents on the beach and deep wading is discouraged, but distance casting is not essential so it's not necessary anyway. The currents are so strong that there are signs erected asking people not to swim.

THE FISHING

Known for bass, this beach actually holds the Irish record – a fish of 17lb 13oz caught in October 2000 by Emmet Naughton. The fish took a sandeel bait just before low water.

At the southern end of the beach, accessed beside the golf hotel, the River Creegh enters the sea across a rocky area with extensive pools

and weedy areas. As the tide fills, this is a good spot for spinning weedless lures for bass working in around the kelp. Extreme caution is advised if venturing out onto the rocks on a filling tide as a big swell can take people by surprise.

The rest of the beach offers typical surf fishing, with rolling breakers and heavy surf

after a big blow. The beach is steeper than many storm surf beaches, which makes for bigger waves, and the lateral current can be exceptionally strong. Rip currents are almost constant, with the outflowing rip visible as a gap in the surf. This is a good spot to set up when bait fishing, casting into the outgoing current, where fish will be hunting for food items swept along the beach and out through this gap. Because of the strong currents, this is one beach that can fish better over high or low water, when currents are slacker.

Bass, flounder and sea trout are all target species



Try lures at the southern end where you'll find weed and pools.



The rest of the strand is a classic Irish surf venue



ONBEG) STRAND

Bass are caught from spring onwards and right into winter, with the summer and autumn the best time. Spinning produces best on a filling tide in early morning or late evening. Spinning on the beach will also take bass, particularly at night. Sea trout are regularly caught too but require a licence to target them. If you are fishing without a licence any sea trout caught must be released. Flounder and turbot are by far the most frequent species and even small fish will take a big bait. Tope and thornback ray are a possibility too, and painted (small-eyed) ray have been taken also.

Lugworms, sandeel and crabs will all work well here. Big fish baits for ray and tope.

ACCESS

There are two access points. A car park beside the golf hotel (52.74563, -9.50427) gives access to the southern end of the beach via a short footpath. Midway along the beach, a small car park (52.75295, -9.48975) allows you to walk along a track that crosses the golf course. This is a public right of way; even Donald Trump himself can't tell you to get off his land! But with golfers playing through, we don't advise you linger. The sand dunes are protected and prone to erosion, so please don't climb them.

RIGHT: Lug is a top bait and can be dug locally



BAIT

Lugworms can be dug at the nearby beach in Doonbeg, near the mouth of the river. Soft and peeler crab can also be collected here among the weed. The nearest tackle shops with frozen or fresh bait supplies are in Ennis and Liscloonvarna, both a 45 minute drive away, so best to stock up en route and bring it with you. ■

NEED TO KNOW

GETTING THERE

Get the ferry to Dublin (routes from Holyhead and Liverpool) or Rosslare (from Pembroke). Doonbeg is just over a 3 hour drive from Dublin and 3hr45 from



Rosslare. If travelling light, with just the lure rod, Shannon Airport is an hour's drive away and has flights to several UK airports.

STAY

West Clare is a popular holiday destination in Ireland, with lots of little seaside towns and villages. Accommodation ranges from the 5-star golf hotel on the beach to B&Bs and campsites, of which there are plenty in the area. Nearby Doonbeg has some nice eating and drinking options, check out Kilkee or Lahinch too. See www.discoverireland.ie for recommended accommodation options.



ABERAVON BEACH

Easy access and great fishing make this South Wales beach venue a popular mark

Located in the north-east corner of Swansea Bay, sandwiched between the mouths of the River Neath and the River Afon, Aberavon Beach is a venue that has something to offer all anglers. Aside from very good fishing, access is extremely easy with car parking available right alongside the beach, which extends for three miles, faces south-west, and where fish are caught throughout its length.

You can catch fish here at all stages of any tide, but of course there are a few local hot spots. As is usually the case when planning to fish a new venue it would be advantageous on your first trip to arrive around low water, allowing you to identify subtle features such as gullies, sand bars and patches of rougher ground.

TACTICS & SPECIES

Most of the more experienced anglers generally fish at Aberavon Beach for around two hours either side of low water, on large spring tides. Among the many species that can be caught here thornback ray, which can be caught throughout most of the year, and smoothhounds, that start to show during spring, are amongst the most popular targets. Both species can be

caught the entire length of the beach, though the area at the southern end nearest the steel works, known as Jack Stones, is the ray and hound hotspot.

Fish two hours either side of low water

Thornbacks are caught throughout the year





Cast out at low tide and walk the rod back as the tide floods, leaving the bait in the water

One very effective technique at Aberavon is to start fishing at low water, cast out a large bait, then gradually feed out line as the flooding tide forces you up the beach, thus leaving the baited rig in situ. The best rigs for either ray or smoothhounds are either a pulley rig or a long and low. Sandeels along with squid and various cuts of fish are effective baits for thornback; however nothing beats good quality fresh peeler crabs for smoothhounds. Other species that can be caught using this technique include plenty of dogfish and the occasional specimen bass. Using similar tactics with worm baits during the autumn and winter can at times produce cod.

Aberavon is one of a seemingly increasing number of venues in the area that anglers now fish to catch golden grey mullet. The best tactics for these are to use two or three hook paternoster or 'scratching rigs' baited with maddies. Don't cast too far out, as often these hard fighting fish will be feeding in less than knee-deep water, even right up against the surfline. Golden grey mullet are available throughout the summer and into the early autumn. Other species caught here include various species of flatfish such as dabs, flounder, plaice, small turbot and an occasional Dover sole, along with dogfish, whiting and gurnards. ■



Try using sandeel, squid and fish baits for the thornbacks

NEED TO KNOW

GETTING THERE

To get to Aberavon Beach exit the M4 at Port Talbot and follow the signs for Aberavon and the seafront. If you have a Sat-Nav, the postcode for one of several seafront cafes is SA12 6QP.



There are plenty of places to park adjacent to the beach. Most are pay and display with a nominal charge. This is a great venue for junior or less able anglers, with access to the beach via steps possible at several locations along the sea front.

TACKLE SHOPS:

- Ewenny Angling Centre. Tel: 01656 66269, or visit www.reelfishing.co.uk
- Keens Tackle and Guns. Tel: 01656 722448, or visit www.keenstackleandguns.co.uk
- Mainwaring's Angling Centre. Tel: 01792 202245, or visit mainwaringsfishing.co.uk
- Dragon Baits who farm ragworms, including maddies, are conveniently located very close to this venue. Tel: 01639 894111



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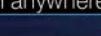
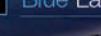
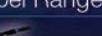
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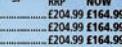
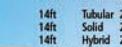
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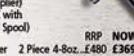
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Surfcasting Rods	OUR RRP PRICE	OUR RRP PRICE	
13ft 3-Sax Fixed Spool.....	£205 £179.99	13ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool.....	£235 £199.99
12ft 3-Sax Multiplier.....	£205 £179.99	13ft 5-7oz Multiplier.....	£245 £199.99
14ft 3-Sax Fixed Spool.....	£215 £189.99	14ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool.....	£245 £199.99
14ft 3-Sax Multiplier.....	£215 £189.99	14ft 5-7oz Multiplier.....	£255 £209.99
		15ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool.....	£255 £209.99
		15ft 5-7oz Multiplier.....	£255 £209.99

SHIMANO SURF RODS		SPEEDMASTER - BXG Surf Rods	
Fishing rods for beach fishing		SPEEDMASTER - Beach Rods	
SPEEDMASTER Lite Rod + 2 Tips		High Modulus Full Carbon + HPC blank with Nanosheet technology produces lighter, stronger blank with increased responsiveness & casting distance	
• High Modulus Full Carbon + HPC blank with Nanosheet technology produces lighter, stronger blank with increased responsiveness & casting distance		14ft Tubular 225g.....	RRP £204.99 NOW £164.99
• Fuji KT Type K anti-tangle guides		14ft Solid 225g.....	RRP £204.99 NOW £164.99
• Fuji DPS reel seat.		14ft Hybrid 225g.....	RRP £204.99 NOW £164.99
• Ultra sensitive solid tip design		14ft 6in Tubular 225g.....	RRP £149.99 NOW £174.99
• Extra fast action for increased tip speed when casting.	RRP NOW 13ft 120g / 4.25oz £194.99 £159.99	14ft 6in Solid 225g.....	RRP £149.99 NOW £174.99
		14ft 6in Hybrid 225g.....	RRP £149.99 NOW £174.99
2 PIECES		3 PIECES	
			
SPEEDMASTER - Beach Rods		High Modulus Full Carbon + HPC blank with Nanosheet technology produces lighter, stronger blank with increased responsiveness and casting distance.	
			
High Modulus Full Carbon + HPC blank with Nanosheet technology produces lighter, stronger blank with increased responsiveness & casting distance.		3 PIECES	
14ft 9in Solid + 3 Tips 120g / 4oz £124.99 £179.99		14ft 9in Solid + 3 Tips 120g / 4oz £124.99 £179.99	RRP NOW 15ft 5in Solid 150g / 6oz £124.99 £149
			3 PIECES

The image shows the AKIOS FURY FX420 fishing rod, a reel, and a product box. The rod has a black and silver finish with 'FURY FX420' printed on it. The reel is black with a silver spool. The box is white with green and black text. The background features a green and black abstract design.

SHIMANO	SURF LEADER ULTRA - BX Surf Rods
SURF RODS	FLAGSHIP MODEL
Fishing rods for beach fishing	UNBEATABLE DISTANCE CASTING ABILITY
STC - Travel Surf Rods	RRP NOW
• 6 Piece	13ft 11in Tubular 225g £84.99 £399.99
• Blank material: XT60 + NANO	13ft 11in Solid 225g £84.99 £399.99
• Reel seat: Shimano DPS	14ft 9in Tubular 225g £84.99 £399.99
• Guide type: Shimano	14ft 9in Solid 225g £84.99 £399.99
• Stainless Steel Hardline	
• Number of guides: 9	
• Packaged in a hardcase tube	
RRP NOW	3 PIECES
13ft 225g £24.99 £199.99	
14ft 225g £24.99 £249.99	
ULTEGA - BX Surf Rods	Hi-Power X construction for reduced blank twist and greater rod strength - a true casting machine
RRP NOW	RRP NOW
13ft 11in Tubular 225g £29.99 £264.99	13ft 11in Solid 225g £29.99 £264.99
13ft 11in Solid 225g £29.99 £264.99	14ft 9in Tubular 225g £30.99 £269.99
14ft 9in Solid 225g £30.99 £269.99	14ft 9in Solid 225g £30.99 £269.99
3 PIECES	

The advertisement features five Daiwa Multiplier Surf Reels arranged horizontally. From left to right: 1) A black and yellow '7HT Millionaire Tournament' reel. 2) A blue and purple '7HT Millionaire Mag' reel. 3) A red and silver '7HT Millionaire Mag Super Tuned' reel. 4) A teal and silver 'SL20SH Sealine Slosh' reel. 5) A dark blue 'SL30SH Sealine Slosh' reel. The background shows a sandy beach meeting the ocean under a clear sky.

	SALTIST - Surf Rods	RRP NOW
SURF RODS		
Fishing rods for beach fishing		
AIR SURF - Surf Rods		
• SVX and X4S		
• Mega Top Carbon Hybrid Tip		
• Guides: Fuji K & Guide with Alconite (Multiplex)		
• Guides: Fuji LC with Alconite (Fixed Spool)		
13ft 6in Multiplier 2 Piece 4-Roz... £480 £369.99	RRP	NOW
14ft 2in Multiplier 2 Piece 4-Roz... £505 £389.99		
15ft 3in Fixed Spool 3 Piece 3-Toz... £525 £399.99		
Tournament - PRO Surf Rods 	RRP NOW	NEW
11ft 6in Bass Fixed Spool	1-3oz... £250	See Website
13ft 6in Multiplier	3-7oz... £330	Website
14ft 2in Multiplier	4-8oz... £350	
Tournament - HT Surf Rods		
14ft Fixed Spool Hybrid 3-6oz... £315 £249		
Fixed Spool 3-6oz... £335 £269		

The advertisement features the AKIOS logo at the top left. Below it, the text "A VERSATILE DUO... IN ONE!" is displayed in large, bold, black letters. To the right, a long fishing rod is shown with its two sections joined together. The rod has "ENDURANCE PRO RS2" printed on its shaft. A circular inset shows the rod's tip section, labeled "DULITIP". At the bottom left, the text "+ SENSITIVE HYBRID TIP OR POWER TIP" is shown. On the right, there is descriptive text about the rod's features and performance, along with three smaller images showing different views of the rod.

AS GOOD AS A REST

Simon Smith and his fishing mate fancied something different from their usual fishing marks. Where better for a change than Rest Bay?

Rest Bay, situated a short hop from the popular tourist venue of Coney beach, has always been something of a mystery to me. It held an inexplicable appeal and felt like one of those places that was well worth the time and effort required to chart how it fished best. Finally, after many years of regular fishing and diary-taking, I felt that I had 'worked out' Rest Bay's secrets, knowing the optimum tide and weather conditions, and even wind directions, that would allow me to winkle the best fishing out of this small but productive venue.

However, as is often the way, all those years of diary notations and countless hours of angling effort all counted for nothing when a series of huge autumnal storms swept through a few years ago, completely rearranging the topography of the beach and making a visit to Rest Bay suddenly feel like a step through the back of the wardrobe into a strange new place.

Tonnes of sand were lost from the beach, revealing hidden tank traps and chains, and just up the coast at Pink Bay two Georgian cannons were uncovered, artefacts which can now be viewed in nearby Porthcawl Museum by history-lovers.



The sun sets over Rest Bay as an evening session begins

Of course, the nature of the beach itself changed – all those times and weather conditions that had previously proven so productive no longer held true; it was as though Rest Bay had turned its back on me and so, not without a little hesitation, I tuned my back on it too for a while, preferring instead some of the other beaches around the area.

Recently, however, when thinking about where to head for a Friday night session, I was fancying something different to the marks I

had lately fished and, as if from some instinctive corner of my memory, Rest Bay popped into my head. A quick message was pinged to my regular fishing buddy Dai Phillips to see if he could make it, a message that was met with a response as keen as my own. Dai had never fished it before, so enthusiasm was high. Was it time for this little beach to come good again?

I met Dai at the beach parking area at around 7.15. There was a beautiful surf rolling in and a big bright moon in the sky, and I remember



saying to Dai that the evening had a really fishy feel to it. This session would be ideal as, if we had fished a similar tide earlier in the year, around July or August, the sea and the car park above the beach would be packed with surfers, rendering the place unfishable for safety's sake. As it was, on this mid-October night, we had the entire beach to ourselves.

QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

Dai and I are both like children when there's a fishing session in the offing, often arriving at the beach earlier than planned or rushing to set up like kids at Christmas, and this session was no different. This has never been a numbers beach, so it was never going to be wall-to-wall action. It does, though, throw up some good fish along with the odd surprise. In the past I have caught good bass, decent small-eyed rays, a PB cod and PB soles from this beach so, despite the changes of the previous years, expectations were still high.

TACTICS

The excitement wasn't diminished at all when Dai started having rattling bites after the first casts at 7.50. Shortly after, the first nice surprise fell to my flapper rod when I took a turbot of around a pound on a long sliver of mackerel fished at around 50 yards. It had been a while since I'd had one of these, so it was a most welcome start to the session.

I like to fish metal booms on my flapper rigs in this area as they just seem to be more effective, especially when it comes to flatfish. I started using them after reading how the metal might give off faint electrical impulses that



Simon with
a Rest Bay
turbot

attract the fish. I don't know how much truth there is to this theory, but I caught some nice Dover soles soon after making the switch and have never looked back.

Dai followed shortly after with a little school bass taken on a ragworm, so with the pressure off and a blank most definitely avoided, we could ease into the rest of the session as the tide

headed down toward low water. The action wound down slightly with the tidal flow, our conversation punctuated by sporadic rattles and nibbles here and there as we neared the low water line, but if there were any doubts as to whether Rest Bay had lost its magic completely, they would soon be answered. I must have had my prophetic hat on when I told Dai that we should see more action after the turn of the tide started to inject some life back into the water.

I had just blasted a whole small squid mounted on an up-and-over rig out as far as I could when, as I was standing by my rods chatting with Dai, the long-range rod buckled over and simply kept going. I grabbed the rod and lifted into a decent fish that wasn't afraid of fighting back. After a short but very spirited tussle that required my backing the drag of my reel off slightly to deal with the backwash of the building surf, a streak of silver cut through the darkness as a good bass flopped into the shallows, my best for a few years at 4lb 2oz, and only 2oz short of my previous best from this beach. Rest Bay was back with a bang!

As previously mentioned, this has never really been a numbers beach, so anything after this was simply going to be a bonus. I took another bass, quite a bit smaller than its earlier counterpart, right toward the end of the session, and Dai took another turbot on his last cast to round things off nicely.

We called it a night at 12.30 and pooled home tired but happy, making a vow to visit the enigmatic Rest Bay again in the future, hoping to decipher a few more of its secrets. ■

NEED TO KNOW

GETTING THERE

Leave the M4 at Junction 37, taking the A4229 onto the Pyle Road, then onto the A4106, following the signs for Porthcawl. Follow the road straight through the final roundabout and along the Esplanade onto Mallard Way, eventually taking a sharp left turn just past Lock's Common and following the signposted road to the beach. There are a handful of disabled parking spaces right on the beach next to the Rest Bay lifeguard station, and a large, reasonably priced, car park slightly further along the road.



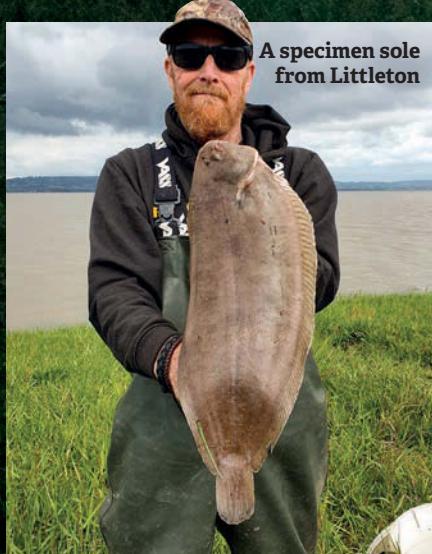
This is a very popular beach with surfers and beachgoers, so night fishing is advised in summer.

TACKLE SHOPS

- Ewenny Angling, 21 Coyerch Road, Bridgend. Tel: 01656 650604
- Keen's Tackle, 119 Bridgend Road, Bridgend. Tel: 01656 722448

LITTLETON-UPON-

Head high up in Gloucestershire's upper reaches of the Severn Estuary and you'll find this species rich and popular high-water mark and match venue



A specimen sole from Littleton

Littleton-upon-Severn is a village in South Gloucestershire and a great little fishing location situated on the banks of the Severn Estuary. Once you have reached the seaward side of Littleton you will have some great views across flat green fields and two notable landmarks. You will see the old Severn

crossing on the left-hand side of the venue and Oldbury power station, which is situated across to the far right. This is a high water venue and you will be fishing from some lush clay banks onto mud. These mudflats hold a good amount of shrimp and mudworm, attracting a whole host of different fish species throughout the year. It can be really comfortable fishing at times, particularly on a middle of the range spring size tide, but the banks can also get a bit muddy after a spell of wet weather.

FISHING TIMES

Your fishing times at Littleton-upon-Severn will be approximately two hours either side of high water, that is if you are fishing on a large neap or spring tide. We wouldn't bother fishing this venue on a small neap tide, unless you are prepared to get a little bit muddy, because the water will barely rise up far enough to fish from the grass banks.

If you do climb down off the grass banks you will find yourself on some soft, sloppy mud. Be warned, the mud at this venue can be really deep in places, so we do not recommend walking out on the mud beneath the grass banks, unless you are already experienced with fishing this venue.

Thornbacks are a summer target species



SPECIES OF FISH

There really is a huge host of different fish species that can be caught at Littleton-upon-Severn. In the winter months this area can be absolutely solid with codling and you can enjoy catching them along with odd flounders. Keep your eyes on the weather though, as this venue doesn't like any sustained very cold periods. Sometimes during a hard winter the mud can freeze, killing off most life in the mud and the venue will often go dead. Mind you, after a mild winter codling can be caught all the way up to May in good numbers.

In the summer months your options for target species can increase substantially. After a really dry spell of weather you can even catch thornback rays and conger eels on this venue. You can also catch Dover sole, flounder, bass and Silver eels in the warmer months of the year.

SAKUNA

NEW HOOK PATTERNS FOR 2022

SEVERN



BAIT AND TACKLE

Tackling up could not be simpler and you wouldn't go far wrong with just fishing simple flapping rigs. All matters of beach casting rods could work well, including a more continental style of set-up. However, because of the strong tidal pull on this venue you will want a rod that has a casting rating up to at least 6oz of lead. Reel choice to suit the set-up of your rod. Mainline and snood diameter isn't all that crucial because the seawater here is always very coloured, so the fish aren't that line shy.

Hook size can vary depending on the size of your bait, but remember you can always catch a big fish on a small hook and sometimes it's nice to have a set-up which can catch whatever fish happens to find your bait. Lugworms and ragworms are always your top two baits on this venue throughout the year. Some anglers also like to add a bit of fish when targeting the conger eels and thornback rays.

REGULAR MATCH VENUE

All the way throughout the year, Littleton-upon-Severn is a very popular match venue, which is ideal for pegged and zoned competitions. There are three fields at Littleton, one that is to the left of the gully and two on the right-hand side. The second field on the right-hand side of the gully is a very popular area to draw in the matches, so when pleasure fishing it could be worth taking a look up in that direction, that is if you don't mind a bit of a walk. By the way, if you are interested in taking part in a fishing competition held at Littleton-upon-Severn then it's worth getting in contact with Reel Fun fishing in Portishead, as they hold most of the events on this venue. ■

NEED TO KNOW

BAIT & TACKLE

Reel Fun Fishing,
Portishead Quays
Marina,
Newfoundland Way,
Portishead,
BS20 7DF
Tel: 01275 848652



Follow this postcode
to the venue: BS35 1NP



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BRAID RUNNER 8 STRAND BRAIDED MAINLINE

- LOW DIAMETER • EXCEPTIONAL STRENGTH • INSTANT BITE DETECTION

300M SPOOL £19.99 SSP

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Sidewinder™ Switchblade THE GAME CHANGER



SWITCHBLADE SPINNERS - ALLOCHROMATIC!

Our Switchblade spinners represent the best you can get when it comes to a high quality metal lure! Designed to be fast retrieved but with a slow fluttering action on the drop they are deadly for all predatory fish.

What is 'ALLOCHROMATIC' Paint ?

This revolutionary paint actually changes colour in different lights. If you spin your switchblade in sunlight you will see it change from a Green to Purple colour, just like a fish scale.

All switchblades feature the following:

- Super Chrome finish with Either Allochromatic Green/ Purple or Pearl colour.
- Designed in the U.K – Union Jack logo !
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- Stainless Ball bearing Swivels
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- Luminous 'Hot Spot' strike points.
- Fitted with 'Bubble Box' for air bubbles trail when used !

Available in 15gm - 30gm - 45gm - 60gm



AVAILABLE SUMMER 2022
FROM ALL GOOD TACKLE SHOPS
sidewinderlures.co.uk



THOSE UNSEEN LINES

Simon Smith muses on the childhood 'tracing' sessions of a young sea angler

Nothing. Not a tap, a tremble or a tremor. I've been here for two hours already and there's not even the slightest indication that a fish is even in the area. That's fine though; it's a beautiful evening and there's nothing I'd rather be doing right now.

Absent-mindedly, I glance up again at one of the rod tips and allow my eyes to follow the yellow arc of my line down into the water. There! No, not a bite, but a definite shift. As I stare at where my line enters the shallows, something is sparked off deep in the memory. I blink, focus and, as I continue to stare, I begin to picture a small band of silhouettes scanning back and forth across the sand of this very beach, the beach I've fished since childhood.

Back and forth, back and forth they go, crossing and re-crossing a 200yd section of beach, their paths passing and re-passing like ships on the horizon as they follow the outgoing tide back to its lowest point. I know them now, recognise them instantly, for one of them is me, or rather was me, 30 years ago.

As I look on, I watch myself stoop to pick something up from the sand, standing up straight with a mini pendulum dangling from my hand. As kids, my friends and I would often go out 'tracing' - looking for lost rigs - on the bigger tides, especially at popular times of the year like mackerel season and whiting season. In a society ever more filled with consumerist,

throwaway attitudes, we were the original recyclers of lost fishing tackle, and to us, this was an essential part of our fishing lives. Paperboys' wages didn't often stretch as far as we would have liked, so sinkers, swivels, beads and, if they were still sharp enough, hooks would be stashed in the buckets to be taken home, washed down and re-used.

We became close readers of the beach, learning to translate the signs that there might be a buried rig in the sand nearby - a breakout lead's wire that would be too thin and upright for a crab's leg when seen from any distance; the miniature hollows that would be formed by the tide around a lead weight lying on the sand, a miniature version of those that formed around the base of the tonnes of rock around the near breakwater.

Better still was the discovery of a fine length of clear monofilament line that would catch the light and fetch us, hopping like magpies from yards away, to begin unravelling its mystery, following it along its length until it finally disappeared into the sand, much like my line now vanishes into the water, a tantalising last-stop to whatever treasure was hidden beneath.

But the lines didn't stop there. At the end of these 'tracing' sessions, we would begin to follow different lines, temporal and metaphorical this time, as we untangled our hauls and deciphered the rigs that had been created by others. Occasionally, we found something new

or innovative and pursued its idea relentlessly as young children learning to draw by tracing over the bold lines of another: copying, measuring, updating until we had begun to branch out into spidery new manifestations of the untested and the exciting, all of which, of course, would be tested out on the next possible tide, cast out on our own lines as we waited, like diviners, watching our rod tips for the slightest twitch...twitch....

TWITCH! A BITE!

I snap out of my daydream and grab the rod, lifting into the bite. Fish on.

I stroll down to the water's edge, winding as I go, watching where the line enters the water for any sign of what's on the end. A dogfish. Ah well, at least it's something to inject a little life into the evening.

Quickly, I unhook it from the end of my rig, the design of which was honed many years ago after those beach-scanning sessions, and walk back to the sea to release it. At the first touch of its familiar element, the fish's body kicks into life, squirming from side-to-side as it ploughs its way out to sea.

I watch it swim off for the final time, back the same way it came in, following its own side-to-side line that, like all others, seems to connect eventually somewhere beyond reckoning. ■

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Catch a specimen fish to stand a chance of winning some great new prizes on offer

FANCY WINNING A NEW ROD AND REEL COMBO from Okuma by catching a great fish? In our catch competition, your target is to catch one over the weight given on our nominated species list. If you do, enter our contest and you automatically stand a chance of winning either our shore or boat prize.

Each issue we award a superb Okuma package to the captor of the best shore fish and best boat-caught fish, both chosen on merit.

Prizes are awarded at our discretion and Okuma reserves the right to send alternative prizes.



Roger Munro, Swansea

Fish: 13lb 2oz, bull huss
Bait: King ragworm & squid cocktail
Venue: Mumbles, Swansea
Date: 13/6/2022



Robert Hillier, Fareham

Fish: 13lb undulate ray
Bait: Mackerel and squid strips
Venue: Onboard Flamer IV out of Weymouth
Date: 25/06/22



Dany Hawkes, Stansted

Fish: 40lb conger eel
Bait: Mackerel
Venue: Onboard Bessie vee out of Mevagissy Cornwall
Date: 26/06/22



Peter Gillett, Ipswich

Fish: 25lb blonde ray
Bait: Mackerel strips
Venue: Onboard Flamer IV out of Weymouth
Date: 24/06/22



Gary Le Cloarec, Guernsey

Fish: 4lb 7oz grey mullet
Bait: Bread flakes
Venue: Guernsey
Date: 25/06/22



Paul Fisher, East Yorkshire

Fish: 10lb 6oz cod
Bait: Lugworm
Venue: Holmpton
Date: 19/06/22



Tim Mitcham, Chard

Fish: 10lb 7oz, small eye ray **Bait:** Mackerel strip
Venue: Seaton, Devon **Date:** 11/06/22



Jan Wells, Poole

Fish: 18lb 8oz, cod **Bait:** savage gear sandeels
Venue: Caught mid English Channel wreck going to Alderney Channel Islands.
Date: 9/6/22



Harvey Huxster, Guernsey

Fish: 4lb 3oz wrasse **Bait:** Shore crab
Venue: Herm Island **Date:** 12/06/22



Steve Absolum, Jersey

Fish: 17lb, bull huss **Bait:** Mackerel
Venue: Onboard Magic off Jersey **Date:** 17/06/22



Kevin Dawe, Cornwall

Fish: 4lb 10oz gilthead bream **Bait:** King rag
Venue: River Tamar **Date:** 13/06/22



Lewis Buckley Mellor, North Wales

Fish: 6lb Smoothhound
Bait: Peeler crab and squid
Venue: North Wales **Date:** 03/05/22



Paul Wastell, Tyne and Wear

Fish: 21lb Common Skate
Bait: Joey mackerel/octopus
Venue: West Scotland



Mark Foster, Manchester

Fish: 6lb, bass **Bait:** Patchinko Surface Lure
Venue: Pembrokeshire **Date:** 30/05/22

MONTHLY WINNERS:

SHORE: Ashley Atkinson, Cumbria
BOAT: Elliot White, Okehampton

YOUR FISHING | CATCHES

MISSION RECORD HOLDERS

BASS

- Shore: 19lb 13oz 8dr John Locker
- Boat: 19lb 4oz Wayne Milton
- BLACK BREAM**
- Shore: 5lb 5oz 1dr C Le Monnier
- Boat: 6lb 6oz Tony Heart

COUCH'S BREAM

- Shore: 2lb 15oz 1dr Lynton Carre
- Boat: 7lb 2oz Lee Hodges

GILTHEAD BREAM

- Shore: 9lb 8oz Scott Smy
- Boat: 10lb 2oz Roger Simcox

PANDORA'S BREAM

- Shore: 1lb 2oz Baz Wheater
- Ray's Bream

RAY'S BREAM

- Shore: 6lb 1oz Jordan Colwell
- Boat: 6lb 4oz Patrick Meegan

BRILL

- Shore: 6lb 12oz Mark Griggs
- Boat: 13lb 10oz Tony Hayward

BULL HUSS

- Shore: 2lb 9oz M Urquhart
- Boat: 23lb D Nicholson

BALLAN WRASSE

- Shore: 9lb 4oz Darren Swift
- Boat: 9lb Glen Carter

CUCKOO WRASSE

- Shore: 1lb 13oz Joe Edward
- Boat: 2lb 4oz D Glendenning

COALFISH

- Boat: 34lb Peter Sillito

COD

- Shore: 32lb Adrian Lloyd
- Boat: 49lb Tony Urwin

CONGER EEL

- Shore: 66lb 8oz Andy Eke
- Boat: 109lb 8oz Roger Beer

DAB

- Shore: 2lb 4oz 12dr Jason Tucker
- Boat: 1lb 15oz Sean McCaffrey

DOVER SOLE

- Shore: 5lb 5oz Phil Troke
- Boat: 4lb 6oz M Le-Moignan

FLOUNDER

- Shore: 4lb 14oz 8dr Paul Blehs
- Boat: 5lb 3oz 14dr Philip Dawson

HALIBUT

- Boat: 76lb Peter Sillito
- LEMON SOLE**

LEMON SOLE

- Boat: 3lb 3oz G Newcombe
- Boat: 1lb 11oz Mowbray

LING

- Shore: 18lb 11oz Ross McKay
- Boat: 88lb 6oz 8dr Gareth Laurenson

GOLDEN GREY MULLET

- Shore: 3lb 8oz 8dr D Woolcombe
- Boat: 4lb 11oz Stephan Martini

TRIGGER FISH

- Boat: 5lb Gordon Baines

SHORE: 3lb 7oz

- Mark Cundick

MULLET

- Shore: 1lb 8oz Glenn Lane
- Boat: 1lb Chris Harris

POLLACK

- Shore: 18lb 4oz Chris Griffin
- Boat: 27lb 1oz Barry James

BLONDE RAY

- Shore: 3lb 1oz Gary Tucker
- Boat: 39lb 10oz S Underwood

COMMON SKATE

- Shore: 232lb Lew Marsden
- Boat: 249lb Hans Dykman

CUCKOO RAY

- Shore: 4lb 11oz Kevin Hughes
- Boat: 8lb 8oz L Longmore

EAGLE RAY

- Shore: 102lb Ray Lewis
- Boat: 52lb Chris Wood

MARLED RAY

- Shore: 1lb 10z 5dr Pierre Garrick
- Boat: 2lb 7oz 12dr David Bree

SMALL-EYED RAY

- Shore: 17lb 8oz M Robertson
- Boat: 21lb Dave Lynes

SPOTTED RAY

- Shore: 7lb 14oz Liam Warder
- Boat: 8lb 4oz Neil Buckett

STINGRAY

- Shore: 75lb 4oz Ed Spring
- Boat: 69lb 8oz John Styles

THORNBACK RAY

- Shore: 22lb 11oz 10dr Mike Johnson
- Boat: 24lb 11oz Gary Mewdell

UNDULATE RAY

- Shore: 20lb 10z Steve Harder
- Boat: 25lb 2oz Scott Russell

ANGEL SHARK

- Boat: 54lb John Johnson
- BLUE SHARK**

- Boat: 253lb James Fellows
- MAKO SHARK

- Shore: 194lb 4oz Andrew Griffith
- PORBEAGLE SHARK

- Boat: 550lb Simon Davidson

THRESHER SHARK

- Boat: 350lb Bob Smith
- SMOOTHHOUND

- Shore: 28lb 10oz Steve Cullen
- Boat: 30lb Trevor Knight

SPURDOG

- Shore: 18lb 14oz William Roche
- Boat: 27lb 3oz Paul Westaway

TOPE

- Shore: 66lb 10oz Michael Bell
- Boat: 86lb David Cook

TURSK

- Shore: 9lb 5oz Tommy Fraser
- TURBOT

- Shore: 20lb 2oz Eddy Barham
- Boat: 32lb 10z Steve Scally

WHITE SKATE

- Boat: 160lb Pete Hammersley



David Healy, Dublin, Ireland

Fish: 9lb bass

Bait: savage gear gravity stick paddle tail

Venue: Dublin, Ireland

Date: 21/06/22



Tomos Luther, South Wales

Fish: 2lb

conger eel

Bait: Bluey

Venue: Barry,

South Wales

Date: 01/04/22



Elliot White, Okehampton

Fish: 9lb 7oz, Couch's bream

Bait: Squid **Venue:** Onboard Lo Kie Adventures off Penzance **Date:** 07/06/2022



Mark Botterill, Yorkshire

Fish: 60lb, tope

Bait: Mackerel

Venue: Onboard Osprey out of Withernsea, East Yorkshire

Date: 22/06/22



Ian Waterfield, Middlesbrough

Fish: 5lb 7oz, bass

Bait: Caught on lures

Venue: Redcar beach **Date:** 22/06/22



James Knight

Fish: 2lb 5oz, stingray

Bait: Ragworm

Venue: North Kent shore mark **Date:** 13/05/2022

Charlie Benson, Swanley

Fish: 21lb starry smoothhound
Bait: Squid
Venue: Sussex coast
Date: 16/06/22

**Jonathan Daniel, Aberavon**

Fish: 13lb, bass **Bait:** Joey mackerel
Venue: Aberavon beach **Date:** 10/06/22

**David Forrest, Newport**

Fish: 50lb 10oz, tope **Bait:** Mackerel
Venue: West Wales **Date:** 15/06/22

**Ashley Atkinson, Bootle, Cumbria**

Fish: 23lb 10oz, starry smoothhound
Venue: Peeler crab **Venue:** Morecombe Bay
Date: 3/05/22

**Shane Foster, Dorset**

Fish: 10lb small eyed ray **Bait:** Mackerel
Venue: West Bexington, Dorset **Date:** 11/06/22

HOW TO ENTER

Entry by email only to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk

Please supply these details: angler's name, age, address, telephone number, email, type of fish, weight of fish, where caught, date caught, bait/rig, whether caught from shore or boat, if from charter boat, give name of boat, port and skipper. Please state if the fish was retained or returned.

YOUR MISSION TARGETS...

Catch a fish on this list at the weight or above in your region to qualify for the chance to win prizes in our Mission catch competition.

To enter, send us the details requested on the entry form (left) and email that information and your picture to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk

	SHORE	BOAT
Bass	7lb	9lb
Black bream	2lb	3lb
Red bream	2lb	3lb
Couch's &		
Pandora's bream	1lb 8oz	1lb 8oz
Gilthead bream	4lb	4lb
Ray's bream	3lb	3lb
Brill	3lb	5lb
Bull huss	8lb	12lb
Cod	7lb	10lb
Conger	20lb	40lb
Dab & megrim	1lb	1lb
Dover/lemon sole	2lb	2lb
Flounder	2lb	2lb
Halibut	20lb	20lb
Ling	5lb	19lb
Mullet	4lb	5lb
Golden grey mullet	2lb	2lb
Plaice	2lb	4lb
Pollack/coalfish	6lb	12lb
Common skate	60lb	100lb
Blonde ray	12lb	17lb
Thornback ray	9lb	14lb
Small-eyed/undulate	7lb	11lb
Ray (other)	3lb	5lb
Sting/eagle ray	20lb	25lb
Smoothhound	10lb	14lb
Spurdog	7lb	11lb
Tope	27lb	35lb
Trigger fish	2lb	3lb
Turbot	10lb	13lb
Wrasse (ballan)	4lb	4lb
Wrasse (other)	1lb	1lb
Blue shark	-	60lb
Porbeagle/thresher	-	100lb

Send us your entries and win some great prizes

■ SHORE: LURE OPTION

Solaris 4000 or 5000 reel
 RRP: £60
 Epixor 15-50g rod
 RRP: £80



■ SHORE: BAIT OPTION

DSA reel
 RRP: £60
 Wave Power surf rod



THE RULES...

- Only fish caught since June 2022 are eligible.
- We must see a picture of the fish.
- We may refuse an entry. ■ Enter by email only (please include all of the information requested in How to Enter panel) to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk
- Prizes as stated (Okuma reserves the right to send alternatives).
- No correspondence will be entered into.

YOUNG RODS

Sea Angler's celebration of the great angling achievements of its many younger readers



▲ **Tiaammi**, age 10, fishing with her dad at Mumbles in Swansea. She caught a 116cm/16lbs smoothhound on a prawn bait.



▲ **Joey Lurkins**, age 4, fishing Sizewell on Father's Day with his dad and grandad and caught this 3lb bass - his first ever catch.



▲ **Lois Haf Lovell**, age 3, 4lb bass caught using peeler crab near Beaumaris Pennmon.



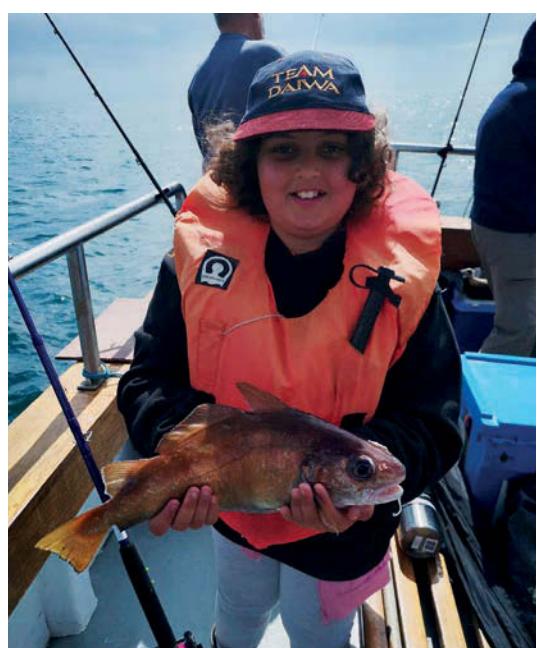
▲ **Max**, age 7, caught this 3-4lb pollack on mackerel feathers, from a boat on Loch Long in early June.



▲ **Taliyah Prosser**, age 12, with her first smoothhound, caught on bluey fillet off Penarth aboard her grampy's boat.



▲ **Charlie Button**, with his 31cm black bream caught on squid, fishing out of Aberystwyth at Sarn Cynfelin (Patches reef).



▲ **Ameerah Bouhmida**, age 10, went out on her first fishing boat competition with Beer Sea Angling Club. Pictured here with a 15oz pout, one of many catches.



▲ **Evie Gorton**, age 15, caught this 5lb 2oz pollock on a family holiday to southern Ireland using a Savage Gear Lure on a 28gm jig head.



▲ **Jayden Kingswell**, aged 13 with a 7lb 6oz painted ray caught from a local pier on the Isle of Wight using a pulley rig and a whole wrasse.

► **Jay stoker**, age 9, fishing the Dumfries River caught this 55cm Bass using small ragworms.



▲ **Mason Fair**, age 7, fishing with his papa, caught a 5lb cod using crab and rag.



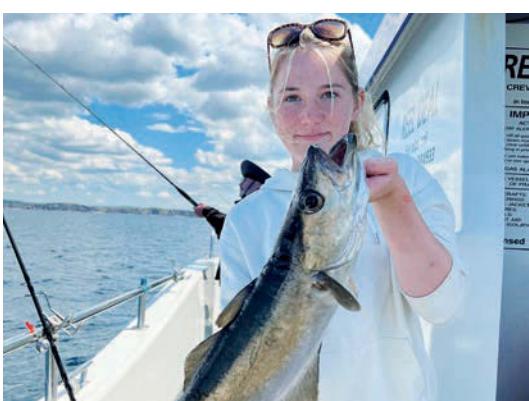
▲ **Grace Hughes**, age 15, on her first trip on Oystercat in Swansea. She caught a 24lb tope using a pulley rig with half a mackerel.



▲ **Jamie Bentley**, age 14, out for a morning on the rocks at Filey Brigg first time fishing for wrasse.



▲ **Paddy Kirby**, age 12, delighted with his first ever wrasse, 2lb 5oz, caught from the rocks fishing with his dad near Clifden, Connemara, Co. Galway, Ireland.



▲ **Lola Davidson**, age 13, fishing on board Real Deal charters out of Ilfracombe. Lola used a whole squid to tempt this pollock, which was the best fish on the boat.



▲ **Bilal Evans**, age 9, with his first catch - 2lb 4oz Golden Grey Mullet . Caught using freeline bread on size 10 hook from the harbour at River Arun in Littlehampton.

£25 TACKLE VOUCHER WINNERS



Fishingmegastore.com awards a £25 voucher prize to each of two winners - the youngster with the best shore fish and another with the top boat catch. The winners can use the voucher to select tackle from Fishingmegastore.com which is based in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

■ Send your Young Rods entries by email to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk

TRAVEL ANGLER



Words and
photography by
DAVE LEWIS

The smile
says it all!



HOSTED TRIPS

Considering booking the fishing trip of a lifetime? With 26 years' experience hosting trips Dave explains what it involves and the benefits you get by paying for a host

A little over a week ago I arrived home following the third destination fishing trip I've hosted in as many months. For reasons that will be painfully obvious to everyone, each of these trips had been rescheduled on several occasions before finally going ahead. Each had involved a lot more planning, form filling, expense and general hassle than is expected in 'normal times,' whatever they are. However, in the end it was certainly a huge relief to finally reacquaint myself with a day fishing beneath a hot tropical sun, followed by an evening with friends enjoying a couple of perfectly chilled bottles of local beer.



Another happy customer with a decent roosterfish

The first trip took our group of 12 to Belize, where we focused on fly fishing for bonefish, tarpon, permit and snook. The next two trips were to Costa Rica where the focus switched to casting poppers and stick baits while targeting roosterfish and the numerous other species found along the Pacific coast of Central America. We also made a few runs offshore to fish the bluest of blue water for tuna, sailfish and marlin. Each trip produced a lot of fish, with almost all of those who had accompanied me catching several PBs, or ticking long awaited species off their individual bucket lists.

In this article I am not going to tell you about the fish we caught, rather I am going to tell you about the structure and format of the various trips that I and an increasing number of other anglers 'host'.

So what exactly is a 'hosted' trip, and in what way is it different to a trip that is advertised as being guided? And why would anyone consider signing up for a hosted group trip, rather than simply going online and booking their own private trip to the same destination?

I hosted my first trip in 1996, to Iceland. Since then I have averaged in the region of four hosted trips a year to around 25 different countries. That's a total of somewhere in excess of 100 hosted group trips. When you factor in a similar number of private and publicity trips I can only say that my understanding wife, Alison, really is one in a million!

In the early days these trips were usually marketed as being 'guided'. But almost always we would link up with local skippers, crews and guides who dealt mostly with the nuts and bolts of the actual fishing. In recognition of the fact that my role on these trips was not really that of a guide, we started calling my organised group trips 'escorted' trips but, along with most other companies who organise similar packages, eventually we settled on using the term 'hosted'.

Perhaps the biggest advantages in signing up to join a hosted trip is that you will be gaining direct access to years of experience. In almost every case your host will have visited your chosen destination on at least one but more likely numerous previous occasions. For example, my last trip to Belize was my 10th to that beautiful country. I've visited Costa Rica in excess of a dozen times, and these were my fourth and fifth trips to Samara where we were based. I do occasionally invite friends on my initial familiarisation trips, but only when I know those people well enough to know that they will happily take the rough and the smooth, along with the good and the bad that these exploratory travel experiences invariably produce.

SAFETY FIRST

Whenever I visit a new destination my priorities are always safety. I aim to fully familiarise myself with the logistics of each trip including every leg of the journey, along with possible alternatives in case of problems, which no matter how much you plan to avoid do happen. Client safety is always a major concern. Many of the countries we visit are remote, and some have areas where tourists are not advised to visit. From the moment we arrive in any country I want to know exactly who will meet us, or how we will get from the airport to our hotel. Similarly, I want to know exactly how we will travel to the lodge or camp where we will be based.

Following a hugely successful initial trip to Nicaragua I returned the following year with a group of anglers, but things had changed. Previously we had flown from Managua down to the lodge we stayed at in San Carlos, but the local air strip, you couldn't really call it an airport, had been condemned. This, I had been told, meant we would take a boat to cross Lake Managua, a journey of some five to six hours.

Following a night at a hotel in Managua we were taken to the lake where one look at the

Hosts are there to ensure you get the most out of your trip



conditions of the lake and the boat awaiting us told me that that was not in any way an option. The lodge owner was insistent we should take the boat, I was equally insistent that we would not. There was no other option he persisted, while I argued that we could drive firstly into Costa Rica before crossing back into Nicaragua at Los Chiles, which is located very close to San Carlos. Finally, he conceded that yes, that was an option. Around six hours later we arrived at Los Chiles to be told that the border crossing had closed for the day, which meant another night at a hotel. The following day we were picked up by boat to complete our journey along the Rio Frio to San Carlos.

Later that day one of the lodge boat captains

confessed to me that crossing the lake the previous day by boat would have taken 9-10 hours, and that the conditions had been terrible.

Of course, I always pay particular attention to the boats we use, and the equipment they do and do not carry as well as the way the skippers and crews conduct themselves, though rarely have I experienced problems with crews other than inevitable language issues which we can normally get around with a great deal of animated sign language. If tackle is provided, what is it like? Are drinks and lunch provided, and are they sufficient? What time does the fishing day start, and finish? And what, if any, are the options in the event of bad weather?



PEAK SEASONS

I try and establish a very clear picture of the fishing seasons at each destination I visit, along with the seasonable availability of different species and the effects of the various moon phases. My goal here is to put the odds for fishing success as much in the clients' favour as possible, but tough days happen everywhere you travel, regardless of how much you have spent. Following a couple of disappointing days, the last thing you want to hear is that you are a few weeks, or even months, too early or too late for the best fishing.

My hosted trips are booked 12-18 months in advance and step one of the process is to ask



Your host is there to help you have the best experience possible

the lodge operator or boat skipper to select a week coinciding with absolute peak season and the perfect moon phase. I always print and keep a copy of this confirmation and take it with me. On more than one occasion it has been important that I have.

The anticipation leading up to a big trip is an important part of the overall experience. I am always available to anyone who has booked a place on one of my trips who wants to chat on the telephone and discuss what tackle they will need, along with specific requirements at our destination such as commonly asked questions like whether replacement tackle can be bought locally, What's the best currency to take and what's the availability of facilities such as cash points. I am often asked about the need for vaccinations, and is it necessary to take a course of anti-malarial tablets to which I advise a visit to your local GP at the earliest opportunity.



TRAVELLING SOLO

Perhaps the single biggest selling point of our hosted group trips is that they are absolutely perfect for solo anglers. Many, if not most, of my past clients had initially been keen to fish at a certain destination, but their regular fishing friends were unable to join them due to work, family or financial commitments and, occasionally, health constraints. For them, joining an organised group of likeminded individuals was an excellent option. Over the years our trips have been the catalyst of many firm friendships that have progressed to individuals regularly joining me on return trips, trips to a different destination or meeting up to fish both at home and abroad on their own private trips.

So finally, we arrive at the camp, lodge or hotel we will be based at for our week's fishing. What now? Over the course of the months leading up to the trip I will have acquired a good idea of who expects what from the trip, plus the varying levels of experience from members of the group. It is my job to organise the group into crews who will fish on the various boats we have booked, ensuring they consist of anglers who share a similar set of goals for the week ahead.

For example, my trips to Samara consist of options to fish either inshore or offshore. Having chatted with the skippers and crew I will have an accurate up-to-the-minute idea of how the fishing has been, and how the weather might affect the decision-making process throughout the week. Based on this intel I can then allocate individuals specific boats which will best meet their hopes and anticipation. At the end of each day, usually when everyone is seated and relaxing over a beer or two, we discuss the following day and then either mix



Catching up over a beer with the group after a day's fishing and planning tomorrow

and match the crews, or if everyone is happy, leave things as they are. Occasionally we encounter problems that interrupt the smooth running of our trips, such as boat engines developing a mechanical fault, and once again it is my role to work with the lodge owner or skipper to determine the best solution.

I am always available to help out and advise with tackle, tie leader knots, help rig various types of lures and numerous other issues that invariably pop up each and every day. Replacing broken rod tips is something of a speciality, and the reason I always carry a selection of spare tip rings and a stick of hot melt glue; for a fee of one beer per tip ring!

We have a lot of fun on our trips and the fact that these days almost all of the places on the trips I host are made up with either those who have travelled and fished with me on previous occasions, or their friends, confirms that, so

far, as these destination anglers are concerned, we are doing things right. If you are one of the growing number of sea anglers who have developed a case of angling wanderlust why not get in touch with either me or one of the other tour hosts who work with the various fishing travel companies and book yourself on the trip of a lifetime? ■

Dave Lewis's recently published book, *Destination Angler 3*, features 26 beautifully illustrated chapters, covering fishing for a wide range of bucket list species at destinations around the world.

- Cost: £35 plus £4.99 p&p to a UK address.
- Contact: david.lewis21@hotmail.com

"Perhaps the biggest advantages in signing up to join a hosted trip is that you will be gaining direct access to years of experience"

Trips such as these can be expensive and once in a lifetime for many anglers – hosts are there to make sure memories are made that will last a lifetime too

LAST FEW PLACES FOR 2022 BOOKING NOW!

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TOP SEA FISHING CENTRES FOR BIG CATCHES

NORWAY



Talk to us about Norway 2022 & 2023

If sea fishing is running through your veins - Norway has it all. Stunning scenery, generally sheltered sea fishing, a huge choice of species and a chance to beat your personal best big cod, big halibut, coalfish or wolffish as well as many other species.

Talk to us about Iceland 2022 & 2023

Expect prolific fishing with the chance of really big cod, coalfish, wolffish and occasional big halibut. Haddock and flatties are abundant too. Top action on pinks and shads. Iceland offers one of the best value destinations in Scandinavia. An excellent value destination.

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ADVERTORIAL

GARMIN® LIVESCOPE™ PLUS



Real time views, clearer images and the ability to separate target species – David Mitchell takes a trip to the Solent to discover what Garmin's new LiveScope Plus live scanning sonar system has to offer

The best of the best just got better', that's the claim I was seeing on my social media from Garmin about their new LiveScope Plus live scanning sonar. The footage accompanying this claim was very clearly the hull of a sunken ship with the railing of the deck clearly visible – an early clear view of an old concrete barge, as it turned out, now home to bream, bass, conger and plenty of other fish species that could be identified with a similar level of clarity. But how much better can this technology get? After all, boat anglers are blessed with a bewildering array of products and new technology that helps them to see below the water with ever more clarity. Sea Angler was keen to find out.

I didn't need much convincing when the opportunity presented itself by fishing for a day with Dave Stenson on Dointhedo out of Gosport which is sponsored by SMG distribution and has the latest Garmin sonar technology on board. Joining me was Dave Lewis, long-time boat angler and marine electronics user, eager to find out what Garmin's new product has to offer.

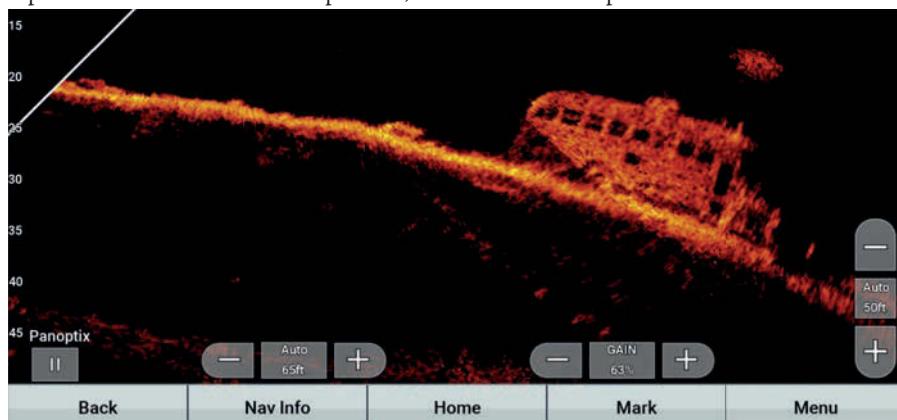
USER EXPERIENCE

I've been a Garmin user for a few years now and own an Echomap Plus which I use on my own boat out of north Kent where I fish. I'm also an experienced user of Garmin's other products,

A nice hound for David



such as car Sat Navs and the Navionics software and app that I find incredibly useful for fishing and navigation on the water. Garmin's experience designing electronics for mass market applications and other sports means, in my experience, their products are intuitive, designed with the customer in mind and the user experience is excellent.

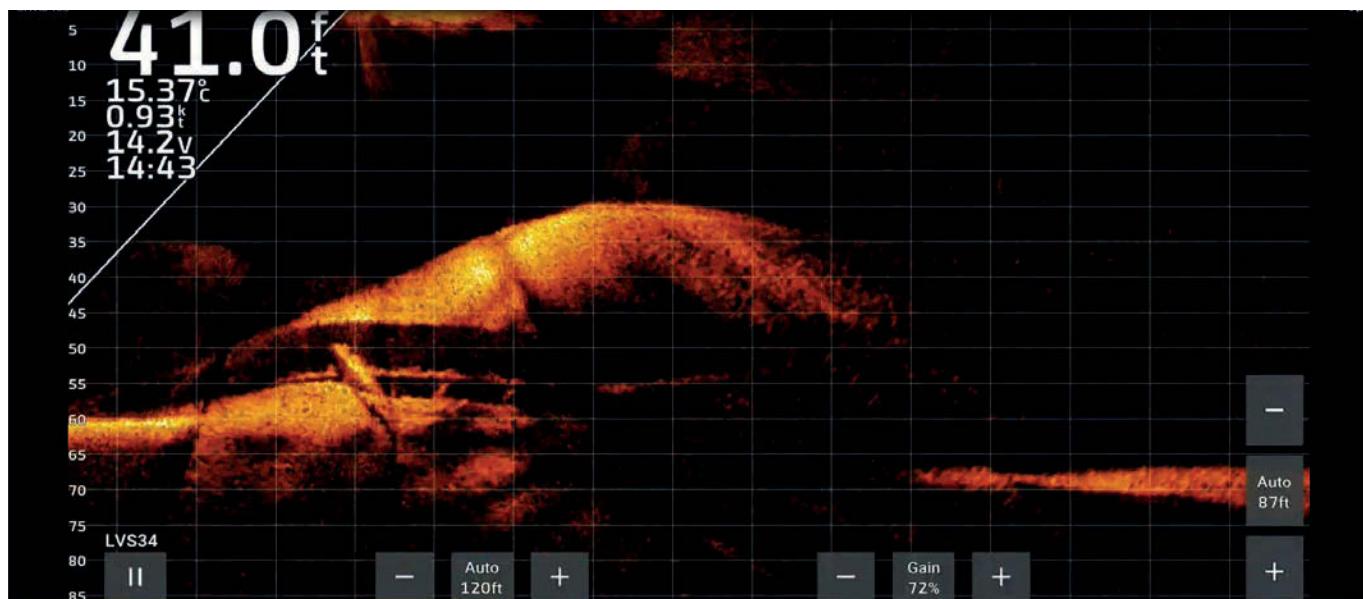


REAL TIME

As we prepared to anchor over a wreck in the hope of finding some bass or black bream the first thing that struck me about the LiveScope is the fact that the images on the screen aboard Dointhedo were broadcasting live images of what was under the boat, rather than images of what was under the boat some seconds ago due to the delay from the transponder. What this means is that we were able to see and target fish in real time – something that is particularly useful when drifting and using lures.

TARGET SEPARATION

The second thing that became apparent was just how clearly you could distinguish the fish, the size of fish and even the species of fish in good conditions with little interference. As with the thresher I'd seen on social media, the 'target separation' of the system means you can not only identify the presence of fish under the boat in real time, but also their size and what species they are.



Combine these two benefits and you can begin to see how the system helps you to fish with more confidence by knowing the fish are there and knowing what species they are, which helps you target them more effectively. Traditionally drifting a wreck is more of a case of hope than expectation. Not anymore! The LiveScope Plus system will tell you whether there's anything there preventing you from wasting valuable fishing time, and fuel, by drifting over a barren wreck. If fish are present and you can see from Livescope that the fish are turning away from your lure you know you can stop wasting time casting or repositioning the drift using the same lure. Change to something else until you find what they are tuned into that day.

CLARITY

As we repositioned over the wreck I was amazed at the clarity of the shape of the old concrete barge's hull that appeared on the screen; even more so when the railings around the bow came into view so clearly. However, the bass and bream had moved on and it was time to do the same as we knew there was nothing feeding below our feet.

As the tide started to ebb we moved off the wreck and headed towards a patch of rough ground that the skipper, Dave, had in mind for some tope and smoothhounds. Before long the tell-tale shape of a small shark was visible on the display and we watched in real time as what turned out to be a smoothhound of about 6lb was hooked and brought to the boat. Dave was getting into the doggies too until we were both catching starry smoothhounds on strips of squid. I do love the power and endurance of hounds in this size bracket. I could happily catch them all day!

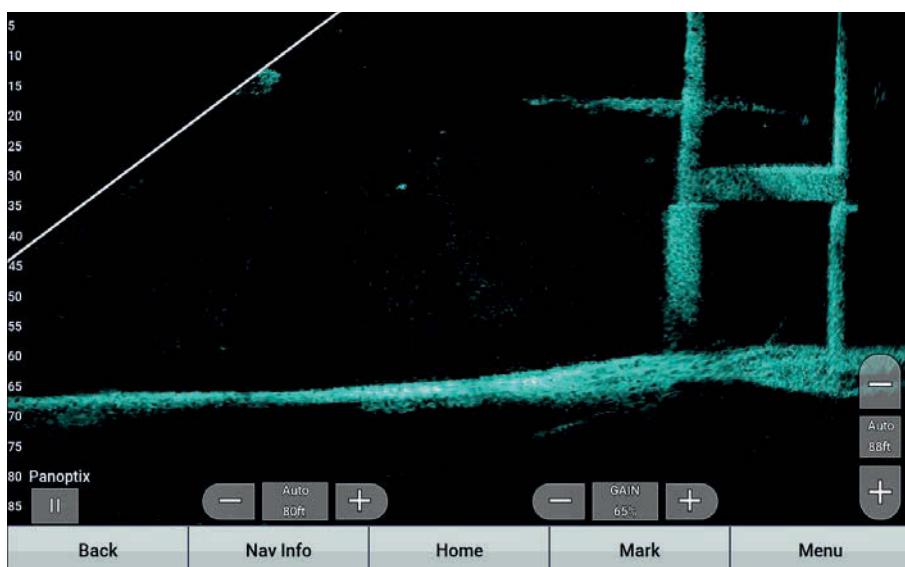
THREE MODES

Another feature of note of the LiveScope Plus is the option of three modes to fit the type of fishing: forward mode, down mode and perspective mode. Forward mode allows you to see in real time what's in front of the boat – great for casting lures and drifting over reefs and wrecks that you are approaching. Traditional down mode allows you to see what's under the boat in real time with a 135 degree bow to stern angle and with a maximum depth in

perfect conditions of 200ft. Perspective mode allows you to see what's under the water in a 150-degree angle from your perspective above the water – as if looking down on the seabed from above. Perspective and forward modes cry out to be used more effectively on small boats in shallow inshore waters over reefs or in estuaries where you may be stalking mullet, bass or gilthead bream and sight casting lures to them.

Back at the marina we were able to take a closer look at some of the day's footage – the LiveScope Plus allows you to record what's been captured and we discussed the merits of the system. Is it right for me? This technology isn't for everyone, but for many dedicated private boat anglers, and charter skippers, the LiveScope Plus provides high-definition real time sonar images that are unrivalled and provide the best possible technology to both find and catch target species of fish.

Ultimately, whether you own your own boat or pay to fish from a charter boat, the precious time and money this technology helps to save leads to more productive and more memorable days fishing which, after all, is what we are all hoping to achieve every time we go afloat. So on that basis, yes; the best of the best has just got better. ■



THE NEW LIVESCOPE PLUS COMES WITH:

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- Perspective mount
- Trolling motor barrel mount
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- Network adapter cable
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- RRP: £1899.99
- For more information visit www.garmin.com

THE SEA ANG

David Mitchell reports from Portsmouth on the new Sea Angling Classic which is bringing big money prizes and an exciting new format to the competition scene



The Smart Fishing team won the recreational boat category and took the trophy.
Left to right: Aaron Barrett, David Loonie, Graham Paisley and Will Parkinson

LING CLASSIC



There was certainly no shortage of razzmatazz at Portsmouth's Gunwharf Quays last month during the lead up to the Sea Angling Classic. The thousands of SAC flags were everywhere. Subtle and understated in a British way it was not! Poor Admiral Nelson must have been rolling in his grave. But by the end of the four days of parades, marching bands, a lot of flag waving, some very competitive fishing, and a big money prize giving ceremony, I was left thinking that this USA-style event might be just the kick up the backside the sea angling match scene needs to inject some life back into it after decades of stagnation and decline.

The event is the brainchild of Ross Honey, owner and founder of Angling Spirit which already successfully runs the World Predator Classic, the World Carp Classic and the World Street Fishing event. If anyone knows how to organise an angling event on this scale, then it's Mr Honey.

In total 198 anglers entered the event with 59 private boats and 20 charter boat teams taking part over two days of fishing. The winners of each category were the teams with the total biggest combined length



of the three biggest fish from each of the target species which were bass, black bream, smoothhounds, tope and any species of ray. Fish were measured and photographed against a verification card and measuring tape before being returned. Competitors then uploaded them to the Angling LIVE app where they were verified and a live running score of the fish caught and teams' progress could be viewed. This made it incredibly easy to keep track of what was going on over the course of the competition and is a system I would recommend to any match organiser. ▶

DAY ONE

Day one started with perfect conditions – a flat sea and blue sky – but with the temperature pushing 30 degrees it was going to be challenging for those competing. The fishing didn't disappoint with catches flowing into the app within only a few minutes of the boats reaching the marks. Tope, smoothhounds and bream were all coming in thick and fast with over 16m of fish logged within the first two hours alone. A strong tide made it challenging to hold bottom for the boats, which were scattered across the marks given to all competitors as a way of evening up the field between local anglers and those who hadn't fished the Solent before. By the end of the day an amazing 533 fish had been logged totalling 384m.



Gunwharf Keys was taken over for the event by the competitors



Marching bands and plenty of flags during the parade through the city



The Sea Angling Classic was created by Ross Honey of Angling Spirit



The Lord Major of Portsmouth opening the event outside the town hall



DAY TWO

Day two saw the weather change dramatically with scattered thundery showers in the afternoon. The fishing continued to produce catches until the tide died off and by mid-afternoon the teams began to move marks in search of fish in the final hours of the competition. By the end of day two a total of 1067 fish measuring over 763m had been recorded. This included 505 smoothhounds, 300 bream, 128 tope, 120 rays and just 12 bass.



The Smart Fishing team net a lively hound



A nice thornback for the team on Lucky Strike II



A scoring ray for Dick Prosser on Oneday



Nick Wallis from the Bad Boyz team with a scoring hound



Steve Batchelor and Colin Searle were the charter boat champions

RESULTS

The leader board went down at midday on day two leading to an anxious wait before the winners were announced at the awards ceremony on the Sunday where live music and a stage helped create the atmosphere of a festival. What none of the top five boats knew on the afternoon of day two was that the leader board

was so tight anyone of them could have won it with a single good tope. In the end the tactics of the Smart Fishing team, skippered by Will Parkinson, paid dividends and they took the recreational boat title with a total of 1270cm, having pipped the team aboard Tequila to the post who had been leading well into day two with a steady stream of bream keeping the score card ticking over.

The 2022 champions with the trophy



PRIZE

The Smart Fish team were given the option of taking the Extreme 745 Game King boat worth £120,000 or choosing £50,000 in cash. Will and the team opted for the cash which was presented to them on the stage. Not a bad payday for two days' fishing!

The England international duo of Steve Batchelor and Colin Searles, fishing aboard Harvest Moon, took the charter boat title with a winning total of 1601cm. Harvest Moon was obviously the boat to be on because fishing from it too were Stuart Newell and Peter Churchill who took second place with a total of 1406cm. The skills and knowledge of the skippers on the charter boats was clearly a key advantage – not to mention the skills and experience of the international anglers on board.

All in all the event was a resounding success and my overriding impression was how many smiling faces there were amongst everyone present. The camaraderie was superb, the organisation was impressive, the fishing was excellent and the prizes (from first to fortieth) were astounding. Congratulations to all those who made it a success. I look forward to seeing you there again in 2023!

RESULTS

RECREATIONAL BOAT TOP FIVE

- Smart Fishing: Will Parkinson, David Loonie, Aaron Barrett, Graham Paisley (1270cm)
- Tequila: John Challinor, Joseph Challinor, Toby Challinor, Kelvin Hindmarch (1255cm)
- Paintball: Steffan Eppelein, Kevin Hare (1254cm)
- Bad Boyz: Martin Fisher, Luke Fitzgerald, Martin Fitzgerald, Nick Wallis (1187cm)
- Lovecat: Phillip Lovegrove, Ricky Collier, Ricky Christmas, James Wasborough (1121cm)

CHARTER BOAT TOP FIVE TEAMS

- Harvest Moon: Steve Batchelor, Colin Searles (1601cm)
- Harvest Moon: Stuart Newell, Peter Churchill (1406cm)
- Wetwheels Solent: David O Donnell, Medwyn Jones (1297cm)
- Valkyrie 8: Steve Perry, Riley Panter (1262cm)
- Anglers Edge: Adam Houghton, Matthew Crook (1215cm)

LONGEST FISH

- Bass, Steve Colborne (77cm)
- Bream, Graham Paisley (40cm)
- Ray, David Loonie (64cm)
- Smoothhound, Ray Evers (121cm)
- Tope, Stuart Newell (161cm)

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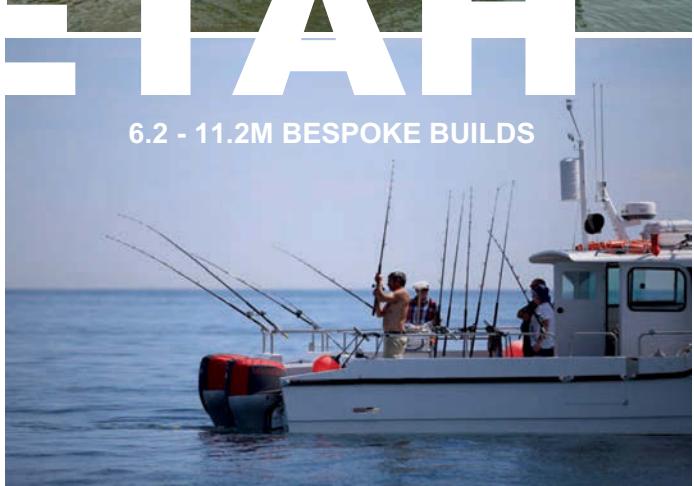


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FISHING THE FORTRESS



Mike Thrussell takes us to the rich fishing waters of Caernarfon Bay, a great venue to try boat fishing this summer either by charter boat or your own

Finding somewhere where boat angling pressure is generally minimal is just about impossible nowadays. But there are still a handful of areas in the UK that exist where rod and line, and commercial fishing activity, is limited. Little oasis of ground where fish stocks remain good and varied.

Such a place is Caernarfon Bay in North Wales. The name 'Caernarfon' loosely means Fortress in Arfon, more likely attributed to the famous Caernarfon Castle first constructed in the 10th century, but it aptly describes the character of the bay itself.

The lack of immediate ports south of Caernarfon and right down the west and southwest side of the Llyn Peninsula means boat access is restricted so general fishing pressure is light. The main charter boat access is from Holyhead on Anglesey, but there are





A codling for the species list



Reef pollack caught on a mackerel strip



A fortress bull huss for Mike Thrussell

opportunities for trailered small angling boats to capitalise too. The Holyhead charter boats work the bay in summer, and from October to March Gethyn Owen, with My Way 2, works from Port Dinorwic inside the Menai Straits giving him access to Caernarfon Bay on the calmer winter days too. It's a place that can fish 12 months of the year.

GROUND FEATURE

The offshore ground feature is varied with mostly large expanses of clean sand interspersed with rougher ground patches and reef ground. There are sandbanks off the southern entrance to The Menai Straits and more extensive areas of sandbanks down off the Llyn Peninsula. A quick study of the relevant Admiralty Chart will highlight and position these. And that's the key if you're trailing your own boat. Don't always rely on information from others when fishing this area for the first time. Study the chart and pick out areas you feel might be productive. Fishing these and working from that baseline is the best and fastest way to find good reliable marks and maybe even a jewel in the crown that few others fish.

The inshore ground is just as varied with clean sandy beaches and bays you can sneak into, but also large areas of rocks, reefs and low pinnacles that will produce a wide variety of species.

TIDES

Away from the outlet of the Straits on the ebb tide, generally the tidal flow is fairly light, especially close inshore. However, over the sandbanks that are formed by tide flows, then naturally the flow is stronger and these areas, though fishable for short periods during a spring tide, are best targeted on tides rising from smaller neaps to middle size tides, say

up to 28ft on the Liverpool tide charts. For general fishing even the big spring tides can fish really well, as will the neaps and its often the neaps that produce the most species as the fish cover and work the general ground more freely.

WEATHER PATTERNS

The bay faces southwest and west straight into the prevailing winds. Ideal conditions are gentle south, southwesterlies or westerlies during a consistent period of light winds and flattened seas. The bay is not overly deep and longer periods of very rough seas during periods of gales will disperse the fish to deeper water. North and east winds are less reliable, but still produce consistent fishing, especially when out deeper.

Due to the clarity of the sea in this area, days with an overcast sky tend to produce the best fishing, especially tighter inshore, but even a bright sunny day can still give good results. Apart from freshwater entering via The Straits there is no real influx of freshwater into the bay area as there are no estuaries, so even after heavy rain acidic values are little effected keeping catches consistent.

SPECIES

Tope can appear in April in the deeper water but can be taken in numbers off the mouth of The Straits and over the sandbanks from late May on with June into July the best period. The tope linger right through into late autumn, though their overall numbers will gradually decrease.

Bass can be taken right through the year, but the main season is from April to early December on both the inshore grounds and off the outer sandbanks. The peak period is June inshore, then September to November offshore.

Black bream can be found inshore over the rocky ground, also over the offshore reefs and rough ground patches. Their season runs from

May to September with July and August the best time. These are a neglected rod and line species here and they are not only available in good numbers but there are some quality fish well over 3lbs to be taken if you consistently fish for them.

There are large numbers of huss with fish to 17lbs regularly caught and they'll feature from tight inshore to way out deep. Anchoring near to rough ground gives you an edge with the huss, but they'll still find you over the clean sand if you anchor up and let the bait scent work off downtime.

At times, the clean sand seems literally paved with thornbacks, and fish to double figures are getting more common again. You'll also see a few spotted rays and blondes caught, so pay attention when landing anything with spots as you've a chance of both rays.

There are wrecks and rough ground out deep that yield large numbers of spurdog and there are some big fish to 17lbs plus caught. The best of the spurdog fishing is March to May, then again from September to November.

The other big draw are the smoothhound. These show best over the inshore sandbanks and rougher ground south of The Straits, off Aberdesach, and Nefyn. Their season is from late May through to August, with June and July producing the better numbers. They average 5 to 8lbs, but doubles are common and bigger fish to over 20lbs caught.

One other species to have in mind are the pollack. If you try to locate rough ground or reef areas away from the main run of boats, then double figure pollack are a potential prize. The common size is up to 4lbs, but there are numerous pockets of bigger fish and the knack for these is to locate the peakier rougher ground and work the ground on the drift systematically until you find a better stamp of fish.

The general ground fishing can see over 20 species a day if you fish appropriate tackle with smaller hooks. Species competitions used to be commonly run by small boat groups in this area and anything less than 17 species would usually see you well out of the running. Red, tub and grey gurnards, dabs, plaice, codling, pollack, conger, ballan wrasse, corkwing, goldsinny and cuckoo wrasse, pout, poor cod, mackerel, herring, garfish, turbot, sandeels,



Ragworms are essential when species hunting

wevers, dragonets, dogfish, coalfish, ling, rockling, scad, whiting and trigger fish can all feature if you vary your presentation and bait.

BAIT

Mackerel is the most used bait for the tope, spurdog, rays and huss. Out of season, it'll be frozen, but the mackerel appear from early May onwards these days, but stay later well into November, so at each end of the season cover the eventuality with frozen but be prepared to fish for fresh mackerel as they'll obviously give you a big edge on the day. A third or half body section is big enough for rays, huss and tope. Go bigger and you'll get dropped bites. Smaller strips 1-2ins long work well for the general species.

Herring is another great bait, and these can be regularly fresh caught nowadays from March to mid-June, and again from September to November, sometimes either side of Christmas if the weather is settled.

Squid is good for the huss, rays and will take tope. Small strips also work especially well for the bream.

If you have the option, a whole whiting about 8ins long or a half a dab, the head section being best, is by far the most effective tope bait. It's what they naturally eat. They'll take mackerel obviously, but the reason its quoted as the top tope bait is because most anglers use it. A whiting or dab section is the better option if

you can catch a couple prior to the tope fishing.

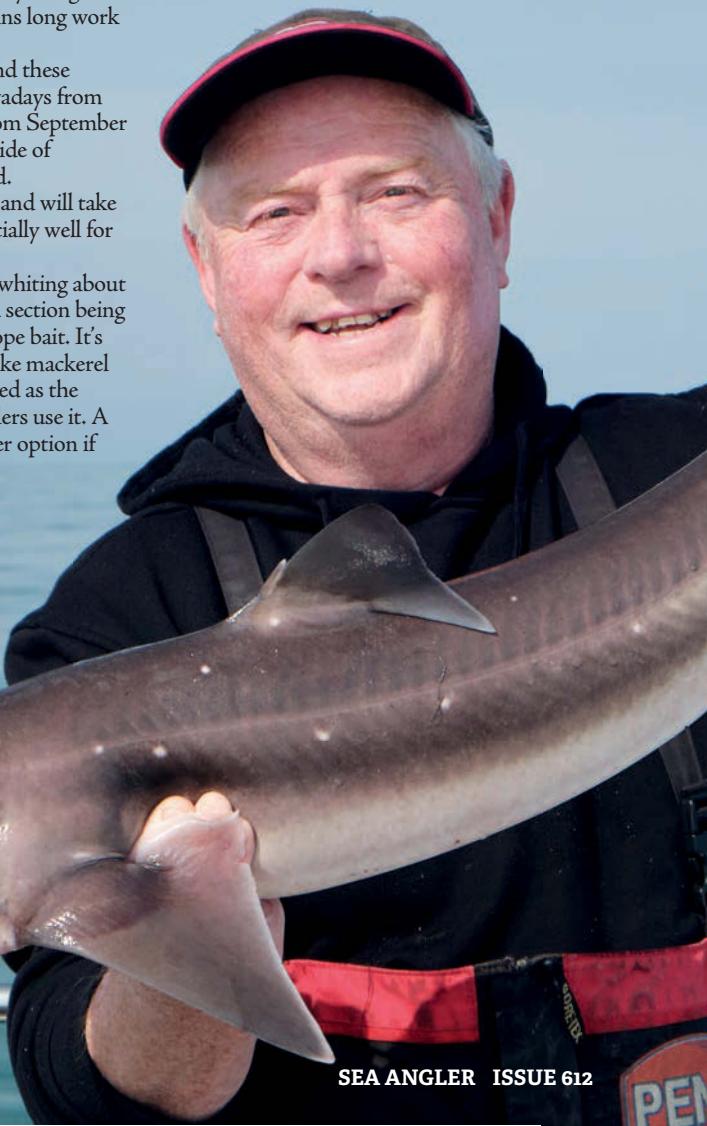
It's worth carrying small feathers on size 12 to 16 hooks and feathering up a few launce sandeels. These are the killers for the bass and pollack fished on a long Fluorocarbon hook length. They also work as a ledgered bait for the huss and rays. If you bait the small feathers with a slip of mackerel, it's one of the best species rigs there is.

Peeler or hardback crabs are the bait for the smoothhound. The more experienced hound anglers prefer the hardbacks as peelers attract too many dogfish which can be in large numbers at times locally.

For general fishing, always carry some fresh ragworms and maybe some blow or black lug. In small sections over the rougher ground these work well for targeting the smaller wrasse and mini species. A whole live rag on a long trace and an Aberdeen hook is also deadly for the bass and pollack just very slowly retrieved.

TACKLE

For general fishing over clean sand and rougher ground, a 20lb class rod is perfect, even for the tope. Combine it with a multiplier reel holding around 300yds of 30lb braid plus backing and it'll handle everything. A good tip is to fish a Fluorocarbon leader of 30lb braid about



twice the length of the rod or a bit more. This separates the coloured braid from the rig and adds a bit more abrasion security for the main line avoiding seabed contact. For the spurs in deeper water, consider a 30lb class rod option, though mostly the 20 is fine.

Regular fortress fishers carry a much lighter outfit, say a 12lb class or a spinning rod rated 1-2ozs and fish the latter with a size 4000 fixed spool reel loaded with 20lb braid. This is ideal with lighter leads up to 4ozs for the smaller species, but in the right areas and with the right tidal conditions it's perfect for working lures for the bass and pollack, and for ledgering crab baits for the smoothhound to give maximum sport.

Carry lead weights from 1 and 2ozs for the bream and smaller species, up to 12ozs. The latter for the bigger faster tides out deep. General lead sizes used are normally 3 to 10ozs and they will cover 85 per cent of your fishing.

RIGS

Tope wise, onto the leader, slide on a Zip Slider boom followed by a size 5mm bead. Tie a 1/0 rolling swivel to the end of the leader and then add 5ft of 80lb mono. At the free end of the mono tie on a 1/0 swivel with a 60lb wire trace ending in a size 6/0 Viking pattern hook. Rigged this way, should a tope break free its only dragging the trace not a lead. Crimp the barb down on the hook and the tope can then eject the hook and trace quickly.

Best all-round rig for the smoothhound, huss and rays is a simple sliding ledger rig. Slide a Zip Slider Boom on to the leader and a 5mm bead. Tie on a size 1 rolling swivel. To the free end of the swivel add 36ins of 30-40lb Fluorocarbon, or 40lb clear mono. The hook needs to be a sharp size 4/0 Viking pattern.

For all the smaller species use a 1 up/1 down rig with the hook traces about 15ins long and from 20lb Fluorocarbon ending in a size 2 Aberdeen hook. If you're missing bream bites on this rig, change the hook size to a 4 or 6 Aberdeen and lighten the Fluorocarbon to 15lbs.

For the smaller general species, try adding a lumo green and separate yellow 3mm bead above the hook. This simple combination is a real winner for the general species locally and doubles your bite ratio most days.

A simple Whitby Rig using a 2/0 Link Swivel tied to the leader works well for working lures and live sandeels. To the same eye of the swivel the leader is tied to, add 6-10ft of 20lb Fluorocarbon and a size 2/0 Aberdeen for bass and pollack, or a lure, such as an artificial sandeel or shad. The lead weight attaches to the link. It's simple, rarely tangles, and presents lures, sandeel and live rag nicked through the head well. Again, reduce the Fluorocarbon to 15lbs if the bass are coming short to the sandeel and ripping it off the hook.

TECHNIQUE

Over rough ground you'll be drift fishing mostly. Gauge the size of the lead weight needed to just keep you in contact with the ground. Occasionally, release a few feet of line just to feel the weight touching bottom and retrieve or release line accordingly to keep in direct contact with the seabed and feel the weight bounce along.

Anchoring over or just above the main ground feature is a deadly way to fish. Again, choose a lead weight just heavy enough to hold in the tide on the seabed, but ideally, when you lift the rod tip the weight will lift and drop back a few feet if you release a little line. Keep a tight line otherwise and you'll feel every bite. You can use lighter leads when fishing the stern, but if you're up by the cabin use proportionately heavier leads to avoid tangles. This is where that very light spinning outfit comes into play as you can not only trot your bait away but also cast it away from the boat a few yards to put your bait out on its own which is an advantage.

If you're fishing the huss, rays and tope on a full charter boat, change your bait every 10 to 15 minutes, no longer. Predators are drawn

to the strongest scent trail and again this will increase your chances of fish when fishing amongst other anglers' baits.

Casting well away from the boat is a top technique for the rays and tope. Just having a bait out on its own well away from the other's baits can be a real edge. This especially applies when inshore targeting the tope off the south entrance to The Straits, off Treffor, Nefyn and Porth Dinllaen. ■



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

CHARTER SKIPERS

HOLYHEAD

■ Gethyn Owen (*My Way 2*)
Tel: 01248 716315, Mob: 07971 924046
Website: www.goangling.co.uk
E-mail: info@goangling.co.uk

■ Aaron Smith (*Bad Boyz 11*)
Anglesey Charter Fishing
Mob: 07711 984956
Website: www.angleseycharterfishing.co.uk
E-mail option from website

■ Gareth Smith (*Spindrift*)
Spindrift Charters, Mob: 07967 911087
E-mail: goseafishing@aol.com

LAUNCH SITES

(Phone prior to your trip)

Launch site information via:
www.pwgcwynedd.co.uk/launch-sites/gwynedd-sites

PORTH DINLLAEN

Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/porthdinllaen/features/launching-sea-craft-at-porthdinllaen

PORT DINORWIC

Dinas Boatyard Ltd
Unit 10, Beach Road, Y Felinheli,
LL56 4RX, Tel: 01248 671642
Website: www.dinasboatyard.com

CAERNARFON

Ty Calch Boat Park - Foreshore Road,
Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL54 5RA.
Tel: 07917 859345
Website: www.tycalch.co.uk
E-mail: tycalch@hotmail.co.uk

PENN Squall Level Wind Multiplier

Tough and reliable level-wind reels covering all aspects of general boat fishing with both mono and braid lines. Features include a graphite frame and side-plate, marine grade bronze main and pinion gear, HT100 Versa Drag system and an instant anti-reverse bearing.



CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
PE1595	20	415yds/17lb	£119.99	£80.00
PE1597	30	455yds/25lb	£129.99	£90.00

SEAGLASS Q8 Surf Reel Loaded with Mono

Sturdy Pre-Loaded Fixed Spool Reel.

- The 6000 is perfect for pairing with your piers/ Mackerel/Bass Rod.
- The 8000 is ideal for beachcasters and surf rods.



CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
RE0837	6000	0.60mm/145m	£29.99	£19.99
RE0865	8000	0.50mm/240m	£29.99	£19.99

okuma Distance Surf Arena Fixed Spool Reel

- Graphite blade body
- Worm shaft Oscillation system
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- Cold Forged Aluminium Distance spool
- Flex aluminium line clip
- Bail lock system
- Holds 210m of 20lb mono



CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
SV2018	DSA-60	0.40mm/210m	£59.99	£50.00

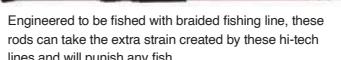
Best Selling Century Rods

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PRICE
CN0181	Graphex Match Beach	13ft 6	125-175g	£515
CN0182	Graphex Supermatch LD Beachcaster	13ft	50-150g	£499
CN0183	Graphex Ultralite ST Beachcaster	13ft	50-125g	£475
CN0394	Fireblade Surf	13ft	4-6oz	£275
CN0180	Tip Tornado Beach	13ft 6	4-7oz	£520
CN0179	Tip Tornado Graphex Sport Beach	13ft 11	4-8oz	£560
CN0078	Kompressor SS Beachcaster	13ft 10	4-7oz	£465

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PENN Rampage 2 Boat Rods

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
PE1706	7ft 8	12-20lb	4	£64.99	£50.00
PE1707	7ft 6	20-30lb	4	£64.99	£50.00
PE1708	7ft 4	30-50lb	4	£64.99	£50.00
PE1709	7ft 4	50lb	2	£64.99	£70.00
PE1818	7ft 6	12lb	2	£69.99	£54.00
PE1817	7ft 6	20lb	2	£69.99	£54.00



Sale

Engineered to be fished with braided fishing line, these rods can take the extra strain created by these hi-tech lines and will punish any fish.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
PE1706	7ft 8	12-20lb	4	£64.99	£50.00
PE1707	7ft 6	20-30lb	4	£64.99	£50.00
PE1708	7ft 4	30-50lb	4	£64.99	£50.00
PE1709	7ft 4	50lb	2	£64.99	£70.00
PE1818	7ft 6	12lb	2	£69.99	£54.00
PE1817	7ft 6	20lb	2	£69.99	£54.00

Shakespeare Agility 2 Uptide & Bass Rods

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	NOW
SP3936	Salt Uptide	9ft 6	5-10oz	2	£75.00
SP3934	Salt Bass	11ft	60-120g	5	£70.00

A fast taper, lightweight blank made from high grade carbon and designed to be held for long periods.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	NOW
SP3936	Salt Uptide	9ft 6	5-10oz	2	£75.00
SP3934	Salt Bass	11ft	60-120g	5	£70.00

Shakespeare Agility Luggage

- Packed with 20 separate resealable wallets, removable thanks to the strong velcro system.
- This practical rucksack sports a waterproof PVC backing, and is designed to be big enough to carry all the gear required, while remaining comfortable to carry.



CODE	MODEL	NOW
A SP3443	Rig Wallet	£15.00
B SP3441	Rucksack	£25.00

Shakespeare Agility Surf Reels

Purpose built for UK beach fishing, Shakespeare's Agility Surf range are designed to handle saltwater use, and are thoroughly tested for reliability. Features a large capacity, distance casting spool, matched with a smooth drag system.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
SP3392	70	20lbs/240yds	£67.99	£40.00
SP3391	80	15lbs/360yds	£69.99	£40.00

Shakespeare Agility Saltwater FD Reel

The Agility Saltwater FD reels deliver a quality, saltwater proof reel for a great price. Holds up to 150m of 12lb mono or 300m of 30lb braid.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
SP4008	40	150m/12lb	£55.99	£30.00
SP4009	60	200m/20lb	£59.99	£40.00

Sealeine Slosch Multipliers

The SL20SH and SL30SH are two top drawer performers boasting powerful, high speed gearing. Nicknamed 'Slosch' by their many fans around UK coastlines, they are excellent for all shore work, uptiding and a variety of down tide boat fishing!

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
DW0631	SL20SH	250m/20lbs	£125.00	£95.00
DW0633	SL30SH	300m/20lbs	£125.00	£95.00

SEAGLASS Saracen Boat Rod

The Saracen Boat Rod from Fisheagle continue the trend of uncompromising performance balanced with outstanding value. The powerful 2 piece blank is rigged with fully lined guides, a dependable screw lock reel seat, and is rated at a versatile 20-30lb, making it ideal for a wide range of offshore targets in British waters.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
RE0552	7ft	20-30lb	2	£29.99	£14.99

AXIA Full Monty Travel Beach Combo

This handy Travel Beach kit consists of:

- Axia Beachcaster 12ft Rod 3pc
- Fisheagle Q8 6000 Surf Reel
- Flig Wallet & 20 Assorted Rigs
- Fisheagle Tourney Shockleader
- Casting Torpedo x 5
- Fisheagle Bait Elastic
- Stillwater Headlamp
- Tripod

IN0865
RRP: £165.42

f89.99

These rods feature lightweight, fast actioned, yet powerful blanks designed to maximise bite detection.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	NOW
SP3940	Boat	7ft	20lb	2	£40.00
SP3941	Boat	7ft	30lb	2	£40.00
SP3944	Braid	8ft	20-30lb	2	£50.00
SP3945	Expedition	7ft	20-30lb	4	£50.00
SP3946	Expedition	7ft	20-50lb	4	£50.00

Shakespeare Agility 2 Boat Salt Rod Series

Sporting a strong yet fine wire with a micro barb, these hooks ensure maximum hooking ability. **100 per pack.**

CODE	SIZE	RRP	NOW
TA1812	4	£6.99	£3.99
TA1813	2	£6.99	£3.99
TA1814	1	£6.99	£3.99
TA1815	1/0	£7.99	£3.99
TA1816	2/0	£7.99	£3.99
TA1817	3/0	£8.99	£3.99
TA1818	4/0	£8.99	£4.99
TA1819	6/0	£11.99	£5.99



Shakespeare Aberdeen Hook 9146

Sporting a strong yet fine wire with a micro barb, these hooks ensure maximum hooking ability. **100 per pack.**

CODE	SIZE	RRP	NOW
TA1812	4	£6.99	£3.99
TA1813	2	£6.99	£3.99
TA1814	1	£6.99	£3.99
TA1815	1/0	£7.99	£3.99
TA1816	2/0	£7.99	£3.99
TA1817	3/0	£8.99	£3.99
TA1818	4/0	£8.99	£4.99
TA1819	6/0	£11.99	£5.99



TIMEACLE Expert MKII 2pc Flotation Suit

The latest edition of the best selling Expert 2-piece Flotation suit is state of the art and has been produced and conforms to ISO 12402-5 & 12402-6 regulations. This update has all the functions and quality that you are used too, but with a modern touch and extra safety features. Bib and Brace trousers that are certified as a 50 Newton Buoyancy Aid having been specially designed to elevate the top half of your body when in water.

The suit features a reflective tape for night safety, a stitched-in belt with ITW Nexus buckle and a CE 394 whistle. Made from a light, wind and water-resistant fabric, they provide comfort for any inclement trips or night as well as safety in the water.

CODE	SIZE
RE0852	S
RE0853	M
RE0854	L
RE0855	XL
RE0856	2XL
RE0857	3XL
RE0858	4XL

CODE	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
PE1946	430m/0.35mm	£234.99	£225.00



NEW

Abu Garcia 6500C3 CT Premium

The 6500C3 CT Premium edition is built to the same high standard as its label mate, the 6500C3 CT, but weighs in a whole 105g lighter, giving you a durable yet lightweight multiplier you can rely on.

CODE	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW

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RIPPING IT UP

In the absence of any mackerel for live baiting for bass, Ramsgate's boat anglers have developed a deadly new method for lure fishing from an anchored boat, as Jeff Jeeves explains

The fishing method I'm going to detail in this article is how to efficiently fish with soft plastic lures from an anchored boat. With patience and attention to detail, if the bass are there and feeding, results are almost guaranteed. It evolved over the last two seasons to cope with some of the problems we were facing at Ramsgate. For the last decade we were getting good bass catches, with several doubles each season, using either live baits or mackerel sections.

The last few years, however, has seen huge amounts of dogfish which have been a problem with bottom fished baits, so live baits became the first choice. Last year the mackerel started showing in late May but by June catches became more and more difficult and catching even enough for live baiting was becoming a problem. Time for a re-think!

Baits on the bottom will always catch bass but with the dogfish hordes, they invariably won the day. Keeping the baits off the bottom using a French boom rig showed some success using frozen sandeels, dead baits or long strips of cuttle. The water off this part of the coast is invariably fairly coloured so it's reasonable to think that natural baits with good smell will work best. It was therefore somewhat surprising that catches were impressive when I started experimenting with artificials. Lures with a decent tail movement proved particularly successful and clearly the vibrations were compensating for the lack of smell.



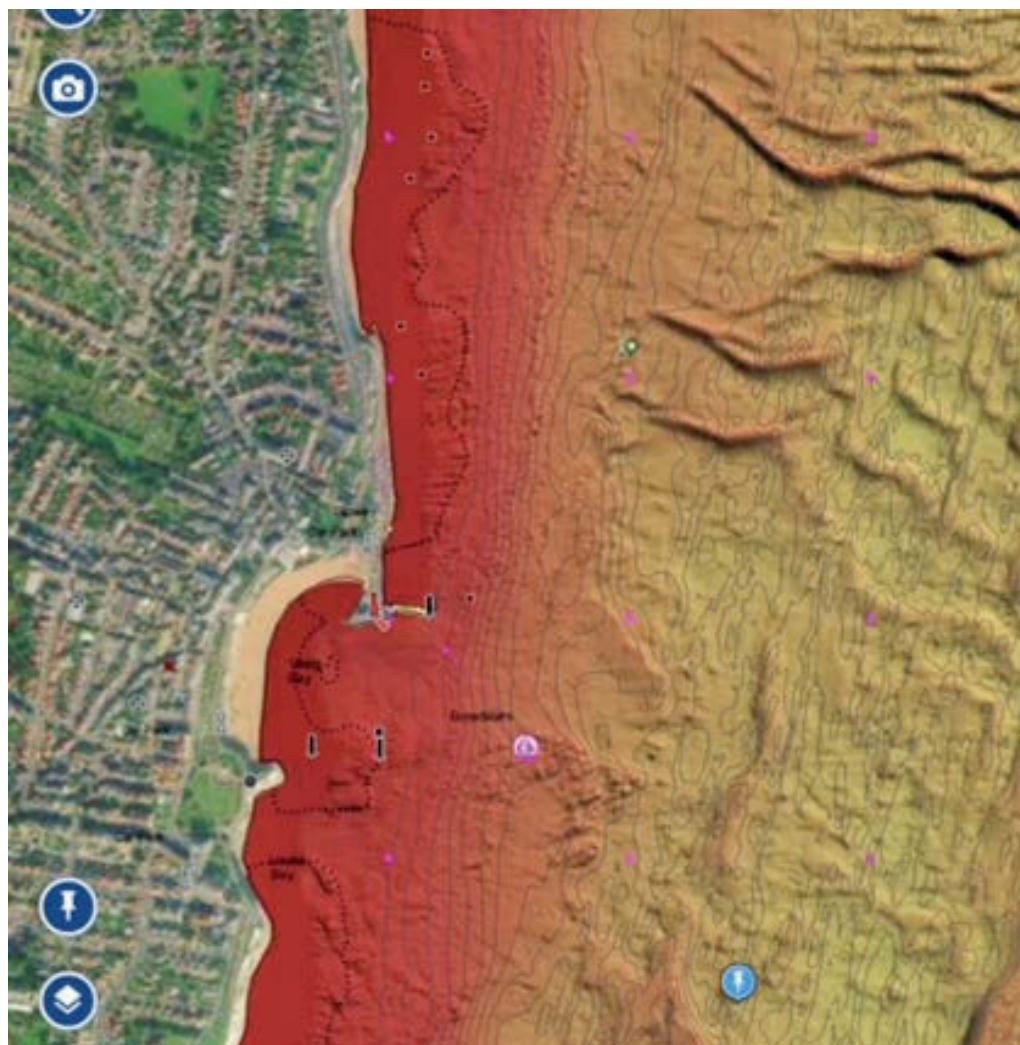
DRIFT OR ANCHOR?

Anglers will always have their preference whether to fish at anchor or on the drift. Undoubtedly in the good old days drifting wrecks or banks with Eddystone eels was a great technique when there were plenty of fish about. These days I prefer to anchor the boat over a likely productive spot and wait for the bass shoals to come through. Less time is wasted with repeat repositioning for the drifts and minimising high fuel costs.

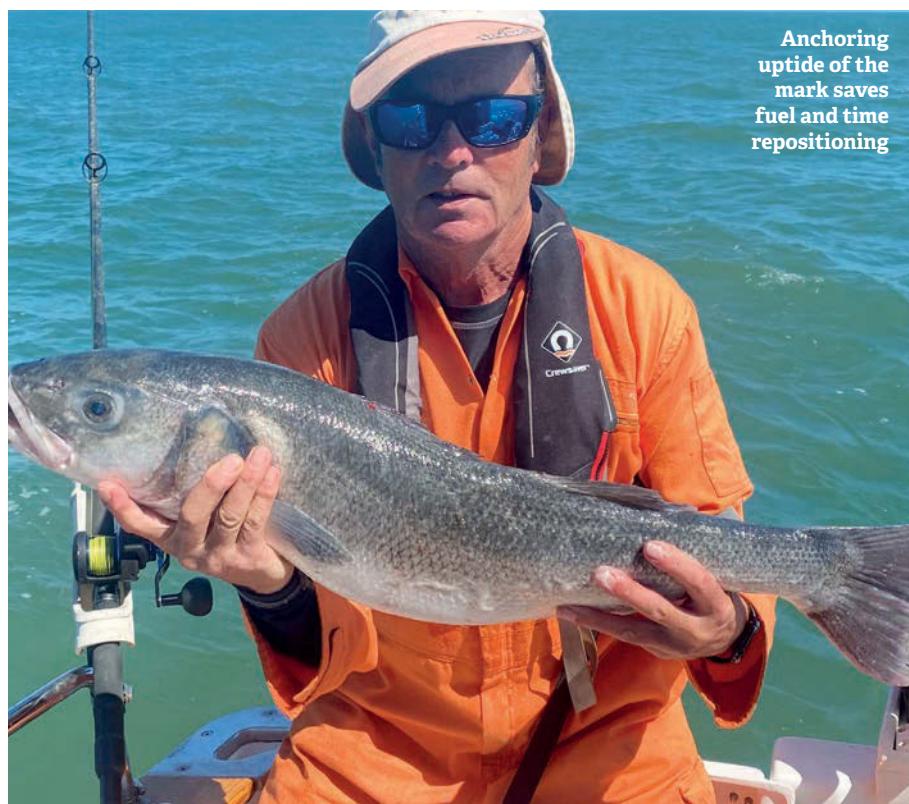
The first task then is to find your spot and accurately anchor the boat in the right place. It's well known that bass like strong tides and Ramsgate is blessed with decent tides and a fantastic selection of banks, ridges, holes, wrecks and rips. The rips get my focus because as the tide flows over them the tide strength increases creating a turbulent zone that attracts the bass. To maximise your catch rate, anchoring the boat accurately and bouncing the gear back to the zone is essential.

Anchoring is an integral skill for all boat anglers and the choice of anchors, chain, warp and scope becomes even more important in difficult ground, and our ground is difficult at times. Tides run strong to the north for approximately five hours and to the south for about seven hours. On big spring tides it can be difficult fishing the strong northerly run. The rips and surrounding ground is comprised of chalk and flints and most anchors face problems getting a hold except in the smaller tides.

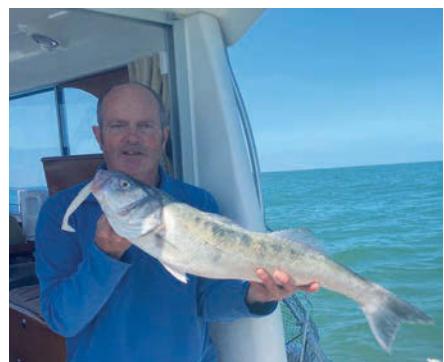
Traditional heavy fisherman anchors work well but are cumbersome to handle and stow and Bruce type anchors that work well in sand and mud struggle. My choice is one of the new generation of anchors such as the Vulcan which



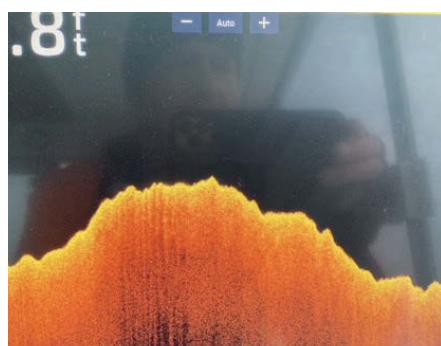
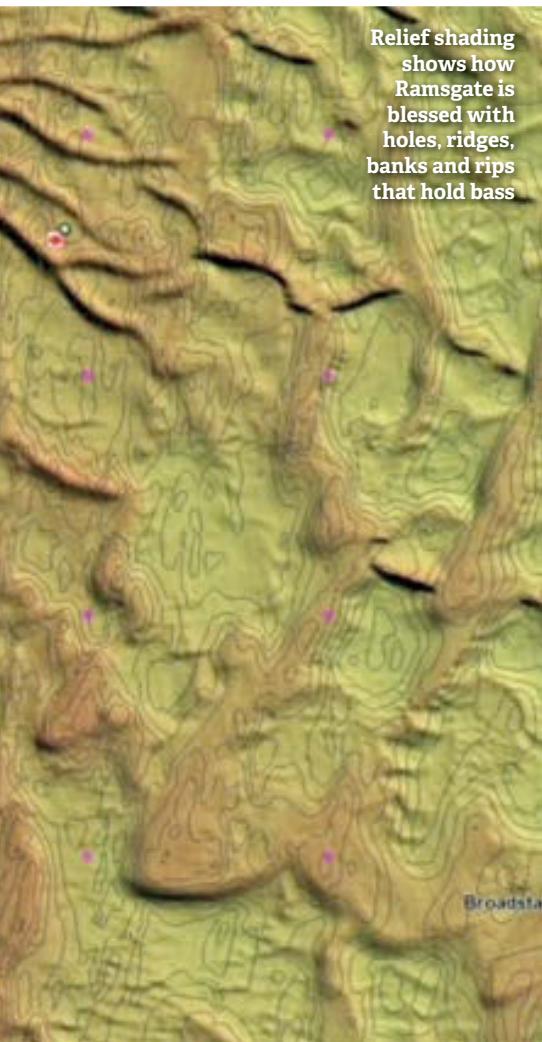
Anchoring
up tide of the
mark saves
fuel and time
repositioning



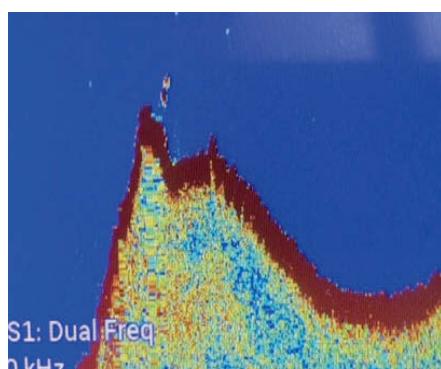
Mick Neaves has helped refine the method



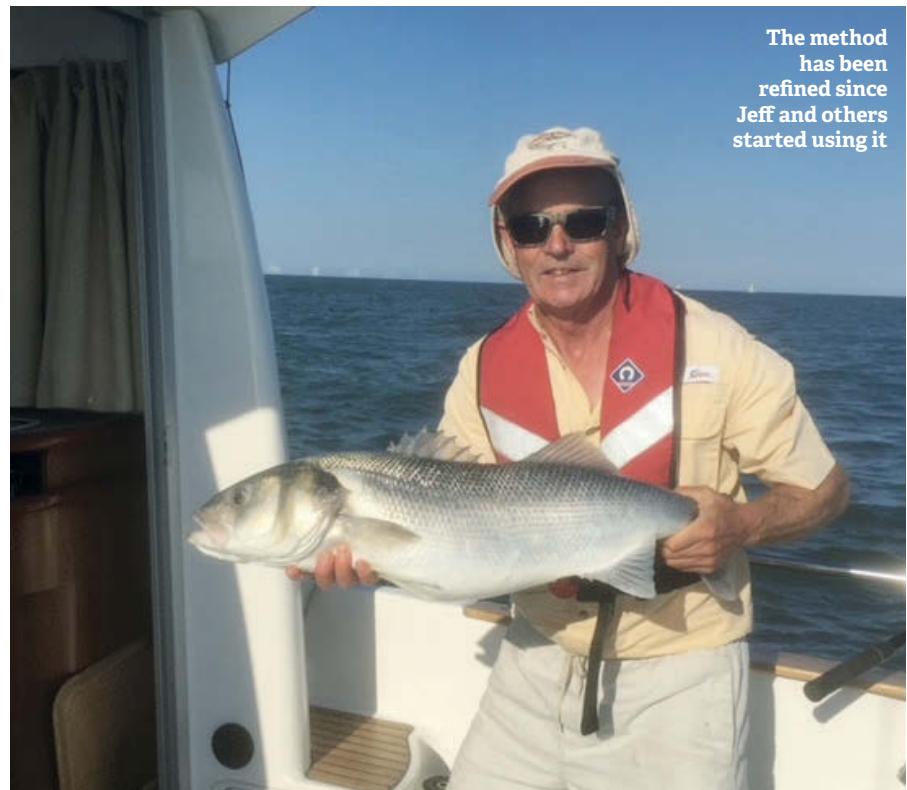
Jeff uses circle hooks to aid safe release



Bass use the structure waiting for prey



A chalk ridge clearly seen on the sonar



"To maximise your catch rate, anchoring the boat accurately and bouncing the gear back to the zone is essential"



You can see the rip on the surface of the water where the upswell causes disturbance

have a heavy sharp tip that gets a good bite in the chalk and scope of at least five times the depth of water.

ACCURACY

To accurately position the boat you will need the anchor position on the seabed to be precise, not the position of the boat when you drop it. The anchor takes a finite time to reach the seabed, particularly if its lowered by a winch, so with a tide run this must be allowed for. A useful tip is to motor up tide of the mark and in say 30ft of water, lower 25ft of warp and just as the boat reaches the required position

lower the anchor to the bottom and then let out more warp as needed. To be precise with this, you will need to have the anchor warp calibrated in five metre lengths. This can easily be achieved by unloading the warp from the boat and colour coding it in five and 10 metre lengths with different colour ribbons or tapes.

With your anchor warp calibrated, the next phase is to find the mark you think will be productive. Historically we used to study admiralty charts for likely fishing spots, but today the fabulous charts offered by Navionics and C-map which run on our GPS plotters give a fantastic picture of seabed features. Take a look at the Garmin relief shading chart of

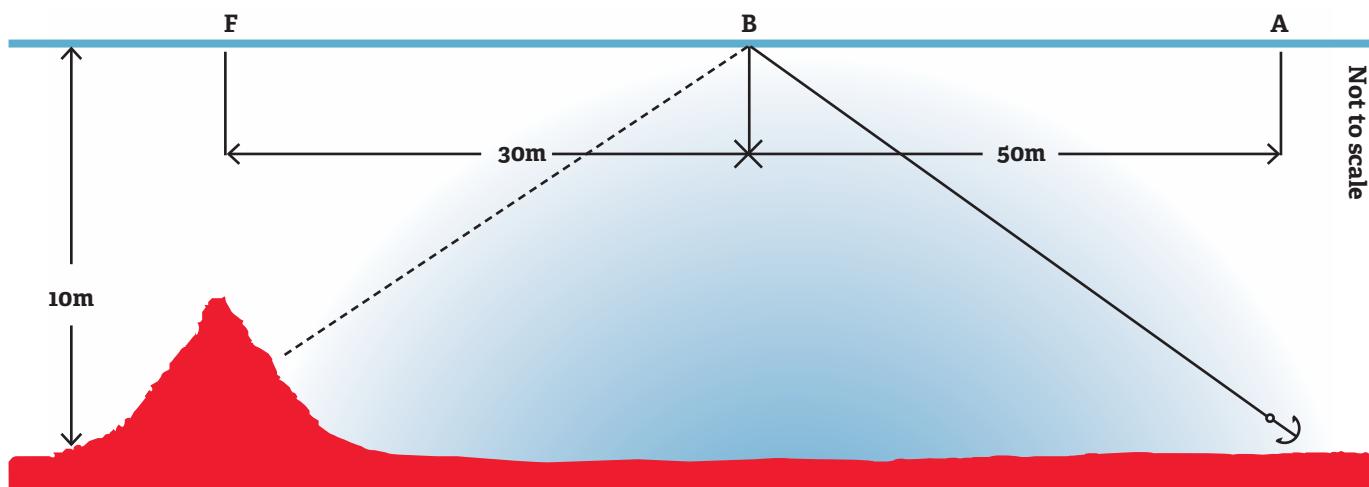
the east Kent coast. This reveals dozens of rips, banks and ledges offering a myriad of potential. You are looking for a spot that you can fish at anchor that will let you drop lures back in the tide into the fishing zone. So, with North or South flowing tide, ideally you need a bank or rip that has a section that runs east/west so you can fish across it. Anglers without the latest charting software can also find top spots by looking for surface disturbances when the tide is running hard. As the tide runs into the rip it will be deflected upwards and show as turbulence just downtime of the rip.

Take a look at the picture showing the cross section of a typical rip – what you will see on the fish-finder. The gradient is invariably different on the opposite sides of the rip and therefore some rips fish better on northerly flows and some better on southerly flows.

To get the lures where we want them to work, there are three factors we need to take into account. Firstly, the anchor position on the seabed; secondly, the amount of warp let out; and finally, the length of line let off the reel. Let's take a basic scenario as an example and work out an action plan.

F marks the spot you want the lure to work, B the boat position and A the anchor position. Let's assume you are letting out 30 metres of line (more on this important detail later) and fishing a 10 metre depth. Any mathematicians reading this will calculate that to fish 50 metres back, because of the angle of the warp, you will need to let out 51 metres of warp. This length is also affected by the curved lay of warp in the tide. The stronger the tide the straighter the warp will lay. Do not worry on this as accuracy can be adjusted by tweaking the length of warp let out to set the boat in the perfect position.

The method to use to predetermine the position of the anchor is simple using a GPS plotter. Firstly, position the boat and mark a waypoint (A) on the screen at the position of the fishing zone F. Then move the cursor to a point 30 metres up tide and mark another waypoint (B) where the boat needs to lay in the tide. Finally move the boat to position B and move the cursor a further 50 metres up tide and mark another waypoint A for the anchor. Experienced users can do all this at home in an armchair using computer software.



Use this diagram to calculate how to anchor, and then fish, right on the mark

LINE CHOICE

Line now comes to the forefront as the most important consideration and it must be braid. We need to have a means of fishing the lure 30 metres back in the tide and I have found the best method is to use different colour braids. My choice is Shimano power pro braid and it's available in green, red, yellow and white. Load the reel with monofilament line so the spool is approx 3/4 full then top off with 100 metres of braid. Now carefully measure out a 25 metre length of braid of a different colour, and knot this on using a decent braid knot. This might alarm some anglers but rest assured this is reliable and will not fail or cause problems. Finish this off with a five metre length of monofilament 40lb leader again with a decent braid knot. This 30 metre working end will need replacing periodically and at least every season; it's quick and cheap to just replace this rather than the full spool.

TERMINAL TACKLE

We now have the boat positioned in the correct place and reel loaded with line to present the lure accurately into the zone, so now on to terminal tackle and lures. Lots of trips involved experimenting with various rigs and hooks over the months and this eventually came down to using a simple French boom with a 15-foot 30lb trace and a circle hook. I tie the trace in two equal sections using red amnesia line, fluorocarbon mono and decent 2/0 stainless swivels. The Mustad Ultrapoint 39951NP black circle hooks are perfect for this method in sizes of 3/0 to 5/0 depending on size of the lure. Circles invariably result in a hook up in the mouth which makes it perfect for catch and release.

The next item of the terminal tackle is the weight and it's very important to get this correct at ever-changing strengths of the tide. I prefer ball type weights that bounce along the hard bottom minimising hang ups in crevices etc, in sizes of 2,3,4,5,6,7 and 8oz. These are all colour coded with plastic insulating tape to quickly identify the size needed.

Types and colours of lures are often important but in our coloured water I don't think it's quite so important although vibration and movement certainly is. Do not use weighted lures because they need to stream back in the tide and not snag the bottom. White and pink colours work well in 5-7in sizes.

TACKLE

The rod and reel needed is not critical but modern high-speed reels which are compact, light and have excellent drags are a pleasure to use. There's room for four rods in rod holders and my setup is two upiders fishing down tide straight out from the sides and two downtiders working off the back. With care, tangles are minimised and different areas of the rip can be fished by using different weights to bounce back to different distances.

Let's now consider a typical bass session off



Anchoring up tide of the feature is essential to success

the east Kent coast with a southerly flow on a medium spring tide. The southerly flow starts running to the south east about 3 1/2 hours after high water, so aim to be on the mark about three hours after high water to get the anchor set in the chosen position. The tide will change direction slowly and eventually flow at approximately 210 degrees during the main run with a strength of between 0.5 and 2 knots. As the tide starts to run a weight of 2oz is all that is needed to trot the gear back in the tide and this is where braid becomes essential to feel the subtle tap as the weight touches bottom.

With practice you can feel when the terminal tackle is working properly, stuck on the bottom, off the bottom or snagged with some weed. The aim is to balance the weight with the strength of the tide so that the weight ends up just on the bottom in the feeding zone with the lure streaming out in the tide. As the tide pushes on the line and the tide strength increases, the gear will move further downtide, so constant checking by raising the rod vertically and dropping back and feeling for the tap is necessary. If you can't feel the

tap, the gear is not fishing efficiently so needs sorting out. Normally an increase in weight of 1oz will be all that is needed and I check meticulously at least every 15 minutes; so with multiple set-ups it's quite a busy time. It's easy to fish at different distances by using a 1oz weight heavier to fish closer or 1oz lighter to fish further back. It's interesting to find that while the bass are most often in the turbulent part of the rip, they are sometimes further back or closer to the boat so experimenting with different distances is simple to do with the coloured braids. With practice it's possible to fish 60 metres back with 3-4oz and still feel the subtle tap of the weight.

The rods are set in their holders, ratchet clicker on, and the clutch adjusted so that the drag is just enough to control the line. The excitement starts when the ratchet on one of the rods screams as a bass hits the lure. Pick up the rod, tighten the drag and let the circle hook do its magic. Do not strike; the circle will turn when it comes under pressure of the drag and set sweetly leaving you to fight what I think are the best sporting fish in our area. ■



A selection of soft plastics with a strong vibrating action



SWANSEA BAY

Swansea has long been a famous angling venue for both charter and private boat fishing. Dave Lewis explains why and what's on offer here



Fishing with
Knab Rock in
the distance

Situated approximately midway along the South Wales coastline Swansea Bay and its surrounding area have long been associated with boat angling, a tradition that continues to this day. Within very short travel distances from the marina lock gates boats can be fishing a wide range of different marks, targeting a multitude of different species. This is a venue that has something to offer all sea anglers.

GREEN GROUNDS

The nearest mark of note are the Green Grounds, a patch of broken ground located towards the western, Mumbles end of the bay; conveniently marked by the SWIGG (South West Inner Green Grounds) south cardinal buoy. Boat mostly fish here at anchor, both on the flood and the ebb tide. Traditionally the SWIGG used to be a productive mark for autumn and winter cod, though sadly in recent years very few cod have been caught off Swansea. Thankfully throughout the year a wide range of different species can be caught here including rays, huss, smoothounds, dogfish, conger, various species of flatfish, whiting and pouting.

There are numerous sandbanks with easy reach of boats based at Swansea Marina. Run to the south towards Porthcawl and you'll find the Kenfig Patches and Hugo Bank, along the extensive Scarweather Sands. All of these are prolific venues for various species

of ray, notably small-eyed, along with small turbot, bass, smoothounds, huss, dogfish and occasionally tope.

MIXTON BANK

The Mixon Bank is another sandbank located just to the west of Mumbles Head, directly in front of the old coastguard station on Tutt Head. The deep water just to the south of the Mixon Buoy is a reliable spot to catch fresh mackerel during the summer and autumn. On top of the Mixon you'll catch all of the species already mentioned, and I have also seen and caught several brill here over the years. The most effective way to fish these banks is from an anchored boat, either uptiding using anchored baits or, best of all, casting plain leads and using the run of tide to slowly drag the bait across the bottom, thus locating pockets of fish. You'll catch fish on both the flood and the ebb, but I have had most success fishing the ebb, notably on mid-range tides, that's tides between 11.2-11.8m. Frozen sandeels are the most effective baits for rays and turbot, peeler crabs for smoothounds and bass, and fresh mackerel will catch most others.

The wreck of the 'Strombus' is located at the western end of Swansea Bay, off The Mumbles.

Today it consists of little more than a scattering of broken plates, but it often holds a good head of fish. You'll catch conger, dogfish and a wide variety of mini



species, while throughout the summer it's a noted mark for black bream and triggerfish. Both pouting and poor cod are prolific here and serve as the best baits for conger and bass.

GOWER

West of Mumbles Head and the lighthouse is the start of the Gower Peninsula. The first mark of note here is a reef that is located close inshore off Langland Bay. This is another black bream hotspot, but also produces plenty of dogfish, huss, conger, wrasse, small pollack, smoothhounds and more. Tope can be caught

throughout the entire area from April through until September. Typically, the deeper marks tend to be the most productive, especially where the water drops off to the around 90-100ft south of both Pwlldu Head and Oxwich Point. The White Oyster Trench, which runs parallel to the shoreline between Langland Bay and Pwlldu Head at a depth up to 100ft, is another noted mark for tope. The tide runs very hard here so this is generally a mark fished on neap to mid-range tides.

ACCESS

Swansea Marina is accessed through the Marina Lock, with access to and from Swansea Bay via the Tawe Lock. Weekdays through the winter locks operate from 0700 to 1900, extended to 2200 in summer. At weekends locks operate from 0700 to 2200. The normal procedure for locking out through the Tawe Barrage lock is for the lock to be taken down on the hour and return to the river on the half hour. The first lock out of the day at the Tawe lock will be taken down at approximately 0710. The last Tawe lock in is half an hour before the close of business each day. Boat owners should be ready to leave their berth at approximately quarter to the hour

Deeper water
marks will
produce tope from
April through to
September



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

CHARTER BOATS:

■ Lyn Marie: contact Tony Grey,
tel: 07970 685038 or visit:
www.lynmariecharters.co.uk
Blue Thunder, contact Mark Thomas,
tel: 07703 797974

■ Swansea Marina, Lockside, Maritime Quarter, Swansea, SA1 1WG,
tel: 01792 470310 or visit:
www.swanseamarina.org.uk

■ Out of Hours Security,
tel: 01792 646440
■ VHF Channel 80
■ Tawe Barrage Lock –
call sign 'Tawe Lock' CH. 18
■ Waypoint position:
51° 36.40N 03° 55.60W

■ TACKLE SHOPS:
■ Mainwarings Angling Centre,
Sketty, tel: 01792 202245
■ Country Stores, Gowerton,
tel: 01792 875050

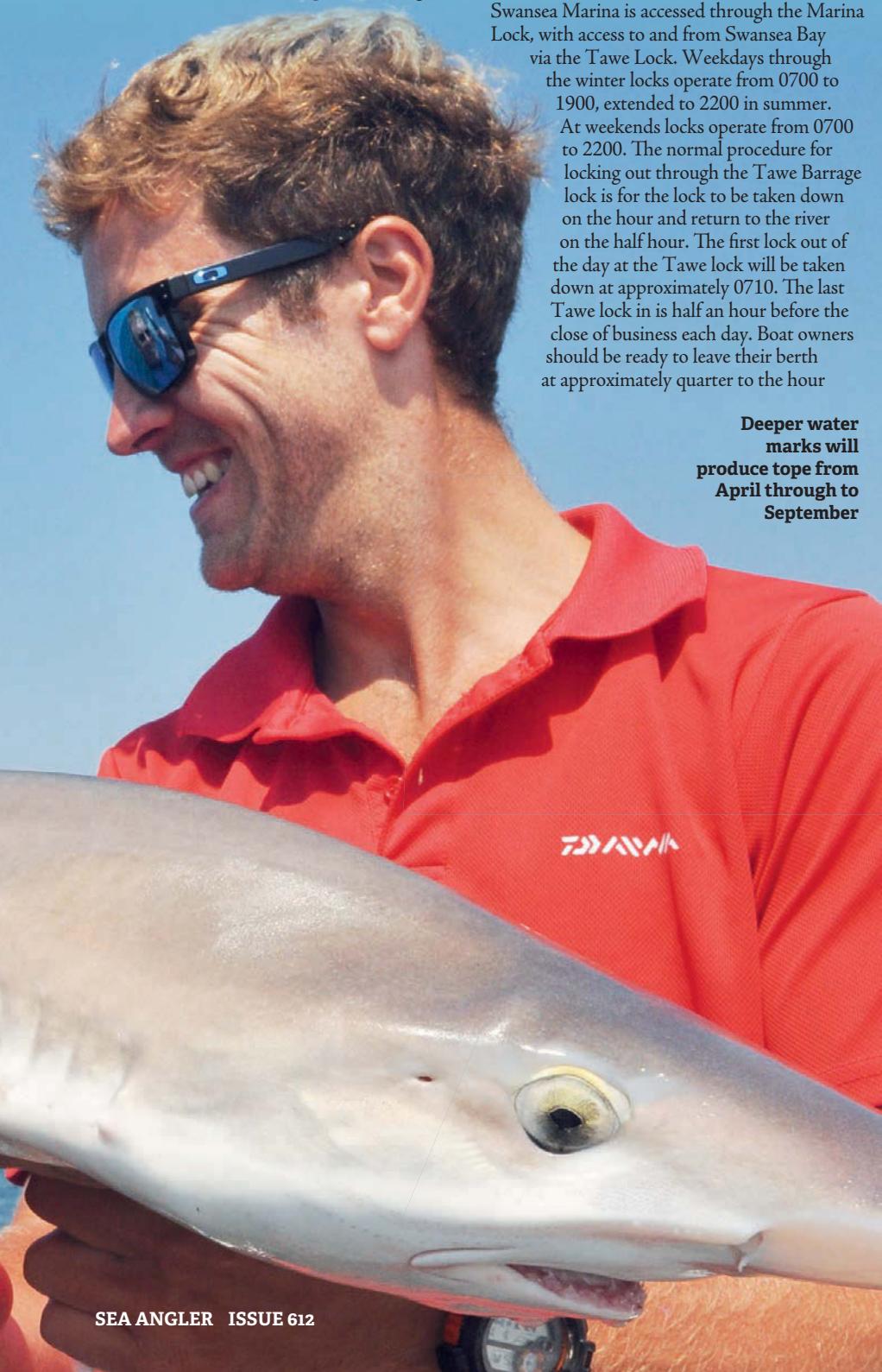
to allow vessels sufficient time to enter the Tawe lock. Most anglers find these times are restrictive and certainly far from ideal, but sadly this has long been the situation at this council run marina.

Swansea Marina is a smart, modern marina complex with a range of bars and restaurants, along with all facilities and services required by the boating community.

LAUNCHING PRIVATE BOATS

Small boats wishing to fish the area mostly launch at Knab Rock, at The Mumbles where you will find two concrete slipways. The first, adjacent to Verde's cafe, restaurant and ice cream parlour, is sheltered and usable approximately three hours either side of high water. The second, a few hundred yards closer to the pier, is more exposed but operable for slightly longer periods, again depending on the size of the tide. For requirements and fees for using this launch site visit: www.swansea.gov.uk/article/8142/

Knab-Rock-launching-and-boat-storage. ■





AIR MAIL

TROPICAL MACKEREL

A common catch on a day's fishing in the tropics, these three toothy and super-sized species, cousins of our own humble mackerel, provide great sport and even better eating

Throughout the tropics anglers encounter several species of mackerel; that is, species from the genus Scombridae. The encounter is usually brief, consisting of a splash of white water followed by the loss of a lure. The three most commonly caught species which we are going to look at here are the sierra mackerel, the cero mackerel and the Spanish mackerel; all of which have razor sharp teeth. Be careful, even the smallest fish can all too easily inflict nasty injuries to careless fingers!

SIERRA

The sierra mackerel, *Scomberomorus sierra*, also known as the Mexican sierra, is found in the eastern Pacific Ocean ranging from southern California to Chile. This is the species anglers catch when fishing at destinations such as Panama, Costa Rica and Mexico. The IGFA record for sierra is 18lb, caught in Ecuador in 1990.

CERO

Cero mackerel, *Scomberomorus regalis*, is similar in appearance and colour to the Atlantic Spanish mackerel. The difference being the cero has a clearly defined longitudinal stripe, in addition to the spots of the Atlantic Spanish mackerel. Cero mackerel are found in the western Atlantic from Cape Cod to Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, and throughout the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. The IGFA record is again 18lb, held by a fish caught in The Bahamas in 2013.

SPANISH

Both of the above species are often referred to as being Spanish mackerel, but the 'true' Spanish mackerel is *Scomberomorus maculatus*. The fish has a green back with silvery sides, marked with

about three rows of round to elliptical yellow spots. Spanish mackerel range from the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, as far north as Cape Cod. They are a shallow water species, preferring a sandy bottom in depths of 10 to 40 feet, occasionally found as deep as 80 feet. The IGFA record is 13lb, held by a fish caught at Ocracoke in North Carolina.

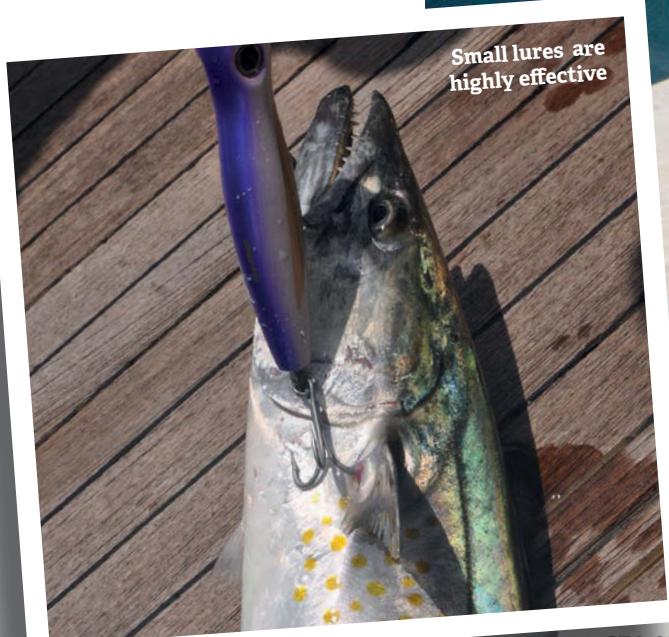
GROUND BAITING

Mackerel are one of those species that anglers rarely target, but frequently encounter when fishing in the tropics. All are highly aggressive. You can catch mackerel pretty much anywhere, but you can be sure you'll find them whenever fishing in the vicinity of bait balls and other concentrations of bait, or any other active feeding melee. If you do specifically want to attract and catch mackerel, all species of which

Sierra mackerel —
Scomberomorus sierra

The world's
greatest
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make great eating (notably as ceviche) then ground baiting at anchor will soon attract small fish, and thus hunting mackerel. This technique is widely used throughout the Florida Keys in the winter months.

Unless you are using a wire leader, which usually anglers will not when targeting species that are deterred from striking at a lure rigged on wire, then most mackerel strikes result in a lost lure or bait. Just occasionally an angler gets lucky and hooks the fish in such a way that the teeth cannot come into contact with a non-wire leader.

With an average size of between 3-8lb small lures are the most effective method for mackerel, notably small metal casting jigs that can be cast a long way and worked with a fast, erratic retrieve. Small, hard plastic lures work well too, but wooden lures very quickly get well and truly chewed up. Forget any ideas about using soft plastics. Most of the mackerel I see caught on my trips somehow manage to impale themselves on hooks attached to much larger lures, usually poppers or jigs.

If you fish inshore off the Pacific coast of Central America then you'll likely encounter mackerel on a more or less daily basis. The same is true throughout Florida, especially in the shallow Florida Keys backcountry when heading out into the Gulf of Mexico, where Spanish mackerel can be hugely abundant. Take a spinning rod on holiday to any destination throughout the Caribbean and you'll likely hook a mackerel or two fishing off rocky headlands, piers and breakwaters, or even the beach, especially if fishing at the crack of dawn or at dusk. ■

SEA SCHOOL

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Q&A

SHORE ANGLING

ASK THE EXPERTS

When sending your question, please remember to include your name and address



JAMES MADSEN

Bristol Channel angler James Madsen is here to solve all your shore angling problems.



DAVE LEWIS

Based in Newport, South Wales, our contributing editor Dave answers boat fishing questions.



JOHN HOLDEN

A Sea Angler contributor for over four decades specialising in casting and rod building.



HENRY GILBEY

Angler, blogger and photo-journalist Henry, based in Cornwall, is our lure expert.



BEN BASSETT

The Plymouth angler and blogger will provide answers on the sport of light rock fishing (LRF), the go-anywhere tactic.

HOW TO ASK US A QUESTION

Email: sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk
or online: facebook.com/seaanglermag

By asking a question you are giving us permission to use your name and where you live in all versions and platforms of this magazine.

Q I've recently returned to the sport after several years away. I'm a little bewildered by the description of beach rods in advertisements: surf rods, continental rods, beach casting rods. They were all beach casters back in the day. Could you shed some light and clarification please?

JIM HENDERSON, NORTHUMBERLAND

JM says: Sea fishing rods have certainly come a long way in a reasonably short amount of time. I think it's great that we have so many options available to us because it opens up lots of new avenues, giving us loads of different options when it comes to our favoured style of sea fishing. To make life easier, I'd break it down to two different categories, either continental or more traditional beach casting rods. Continental rods are generally a lot thinner in the build, with either a really fast taper in the tip or a sensitive glass fibre insert. Although more

traditional beach casting rods have become a lot thinner in the overall diameter as well, the carbon tends to be thicker in the wall of the rod. While this does make a beach casting rod heavier than a continental style rod, it also means they are a lot stronger and can handle more punishment. The introduction of glass fibre tips on beach casting rods has been an absolute revelation, pretty much allowing you to get the best of both worlds. Please don't be bewildered, in my eyes it's a positive change and I'm sure you'll still be able to find a rod that you will like.

Q I would really like to catch a Dover sole this summer. Would you recommend using small hooks when targeting this particular species of flatfish?

MATT EVANS, NEWPORT

JM says: It's kind of natural to think about small hooks when targeting flatfish. However, your hook size should marry together nicely with the size of the bait you will be using when targeting any particular species of fish. Worm baits work best when targeting Dover sole and I can tell you they are not shy feeders.

Personally, I like to use a fairly big worm bait when specifically targeting Dover sole and this can be presented well on either a size 2 or size 1 Aberdeen style hook. In the past, many specimen sized Dover sole have been landed on some much bigger hooks, often on baits which were meant for other species of fish. Obviously, if you are going to be targeting smaller slip sole, which are the more juvenile fish, some much smaller hooks would then come into play.



Q I'm looking to improve my casting distance and have been advised to go lighter with my mainline. I tend to do most of my fishing on Chesil Beach, so what strength of mainline would you say I should use and how will it improve my casting?

MIKE RUDDLE, DORSET

JM says: It is true, you can achieve greater casting distances by lowering the diameter of your mainline. Dropping from say 0.40mm to a 0.35mm mainline could increase your casting distance on the beach by up to 10 per cent and even more when tournament casting in the field. The thing is there is more to fishing than just casting and we need to try and strike a good balance.

Whilst lower diameter mainlines can increase our casting distances, they can also cause us more issues or mishaps when fishing on the beach. Lighter mainlines on fast running reels can be a nightmare, causing the reel to speed up and overrun, particularly if you are less experienced when it comes to casting.

As I don't know any specifics about you personally, like whether you use a fixed spool or multiplier for example, it's difficult for me to be overly precise with my advice.

To explain some of the science behind why lighter mainlines could increase your casting distance I'll need to break it into two categories first. On a fixed spool reel the mainline comes off the reel in loops, so lighter mainlines will pass through the eyes on your rod quicker.

Mainline obviously doesn't come off the reel in loops on a multiplier, so that doesn't come into the equation with that particular type of reel. Lighter mainlines will also pass through the air more easily, allowing the lead to travel faster and that will increase casting distances.

There are all sorts of other influencing factors, like wind speed and direction, along with what casting weight you are using. Lighter mainlines can also cut the tide more when you are fishing and that can be really advantageous at times too.

With regards to advice on what strength of mainline you should use when fishing on Chesil Beach, that is a difficult question for me to answer. I can tell you that I use 0.32mm Asso Ultracast on a multiplier more often than not when I fish Chesil Beach and that I rarely go below that diameter unless I'm using a fixed spool reel.

In my case, I'm not so worried about fluffing my reel, I am more concerned about having a little bit more leeway when it comes to strength. Whether it's pulling out of a snag or playing a bonus fish, the lighter you go with your mainline will mean less of a margin for error when fishing.



Q I love catching smoothhounds thoughtout the summer months but I'm struggling to get my hands on any peeler crabs. Not only that, peeler crabs seem to be shooting up in price again this year. Is there another type of bait that could work equally well when targeting smoothhounds? By the way, I do a lot of my fishing from the beaches around South Wales.

JOHN SMITHERMAN, SOUTH WALES

JM says: Peeler crab can be really hard to get hold of and they certainly aren't cheap, but there is another good bait option when it comes to targeting smoothhounds. More and more sea anglers are now enjoying their smoothhound fishing when using king prawns for bait. At the moment, prawns are easier to get your hands on and work out more cost effective. As bait, I know that king prawn has been catching just as many smoothhounds as crab and it has been working well on the beaches around you in South Wales. Squid is another bait that can work really well for catching hounds, along with ragworm.



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T&Cs: * One prize per winning question will be chosen by the editor. Prizes cannot be exchanged and no correspondence will be looked into. We reserve the right to send alternative prizes.

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Q&A

BOAT ANGLING



WINNING QUESTION

Q I really struggle to reverse my boat and trailer down a slipway, especially when under pressure with people watching. Any advice?

MARK STEVENS, BRISTOL

DL says: Practice, practice and practice again, that's the only way to learn how to competently reverse a trailer. Busy launch sites are not the best place to practice. Find a quiet industrial site, and ideally with someone watching you, spend time reversing around both left- and right-hand corners, as well as straight back following a straight line.

Q How do you measure distance in nautical miles directly off a chart?

BRIAN HAWKINS, WEST WARWICKSHIRE

DL says: Using a pair of dividers, adjust until the distance between the tips is equal to the distance you'd like to measure. Transpose these to either the left- or right-hand latitude scale on the chart, adjacent to the area you are interested in. Each degree of latitude consists of 60 seconds, with each second being the equivalent of one nautical mile. So, the distance in the image is slightly more than 4.5 nautical miles.



Q I have seen several products designed to enhance the effectiveness of lures, by applying what is claimed to be a fish attracting scent. Typically, these are intended for use with soft plastics and plugs, for bass, pollack and other species. Do you think these would improve the effectiveness of pirlks used in deep water?

KEN EDWARDS, KENT

DL says: No, I do not. That said, I have never tried any of these products, so in all honesty I do not know. My advice would be to always fish your lures as effectively as possible, to ensure they deliver the very best action. When pirlking in deep water this means at all times maintaining as near to a vertical line as you can.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

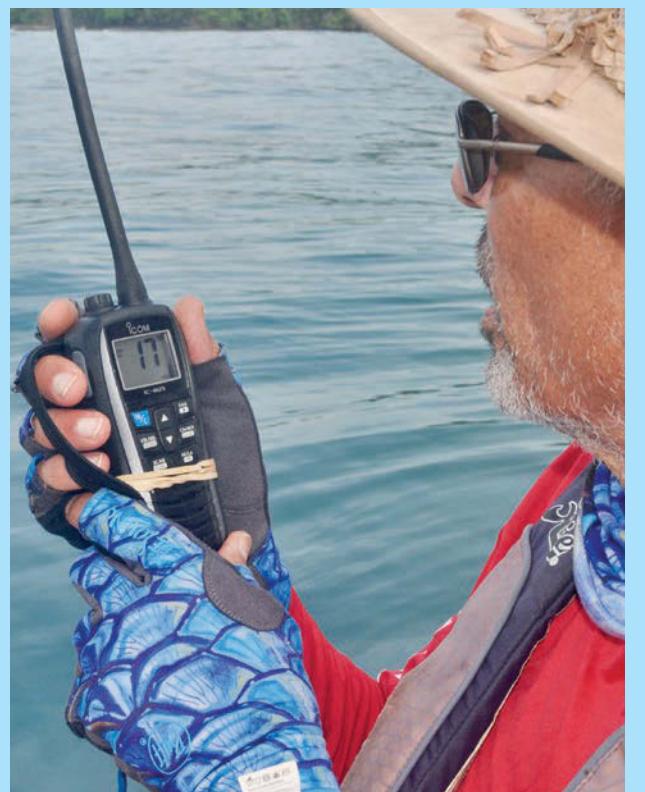
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Q I moor my boat in a freshwater marina. Is it still necessary to trim the engine at the end of the day so that it is out of the water?

AARON WATERS, NORFOLK

DL says: It is important to trim outboard engines as shown. The risk of corrosion is much higher in saltwater, but is still a factor in fresh. Also, trimming the leg prevents weed growths and certain invasive species such as zebra mussels engrossing and subsequently clogging the engine's water intake and cooling system.



Q Are handheld VHF radios as good as fixed units?

HARRY MCADAMS, COUNTY DURHAM

DL says: Handheld radios generally have a maximum transmission power of 5 watts, whereas most fixed sets transmit at 25 watts. Clearly this affects the maximum transmission range. Modern handheld sets really are very reliable and some, as shown, are waterproof making them ideal for use aboard small open boats such as SIBs and kayaks, or as a spare/back up aboard larger vessels.



Q Why do so many boat anglers still carry and use the old fashioned round lead weights you invariably see supplied with children's crabs line?

SEB JENNER, HAMPSHIRE

DL says: Circular, studded watch leads, as they are known, are perfect whenever fishing on the drift over clean ground, notably for various species of flatfish and other species. They 'hug' the bottom beautifully without rolling, which inevitably causes tangles. These leads will always have a place in my tackle box.

SEA SCHOOL

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Rapala®

Sufix.

Q&A

LURE FISHING

WINNING QUESTION

Q I am looking for a new lure rod for bass fishing but I am really confused about all the different specs. Please help!

CALVIN MCBRIDE, COUNTY CORK, IRELAND

HG says: If it's any help, I was in exactly the same boat as you a few years back. I distinctly remember rushing around the Nantes lure show in France, completely and utterly confused about which lure rods were meant for soft plastics or topwater lures, what length of lure rod was best, what the different actions did, and so on. It doesn't matter though, because we all like slightly different rods, and we all have different opinions on what works the best.

With a species like bass it's not exactly easy to suggest an 'everyday' lure rod, but I am going to try. I would guess that most lure rods we turn to for our bass fishing in the UK and Ireland are designed to fish with hard and soft lures from around 8g in weight up to 35g and if you go looking you will be able to find a lot of different rods of varying lengths which state on the rods that they will cast lures around those weights. Do remember that a lure rod rated, say, 10-30g should in theory cope with lighter 10g lures pretty well, but also be able to cast a 30g lure at full power.

In reality, no lure rod is going to fish such a wide range of lure weights with 100 per cent efficiency, but you get my drift. Somewhere within the casting rating will be a range where the rod is performing the best. Some anglers prefer an 8ft long rod rated to cast these weights, and some anglers like to fish with a longer rod. I'd be tempted to go no longer than 9ft 6in when looking at the 7-35g range if that helps, and for all the talk of longer rods being longer levers and therefore putting lures out further, distance isn't remotely everything in bass fishing and



I come across a lot of anglers who don't cast that well but they catch plenty of bass on shorter rods. Fish with what feels most comfortable to you.

I do think that a longer 9ft 6in or more lure rod can help in the surf when you are battling wind and waves, and I hear a lot of anglers talk about preferring longer rods for helping to steer hooked fish around snags. I tend to step up to lure rods which are rated around 45-55g at the upper end for surf fishing, not so much because I am using far heavier lures, but more that I like a stiffer tip which doesn't move around so much in the wind.

When you are thinking about a lure rod, try and handle a few if you can, and then take an honest look at your lure boxes and really dial down into the weights of the lures you fish with most often. Could one lure rod cover all your bass fishing if you are fishing shallow reefs the bulk of the time for example, or do you need a couple of different types of rods to cover a lot of different terrains and conditions?

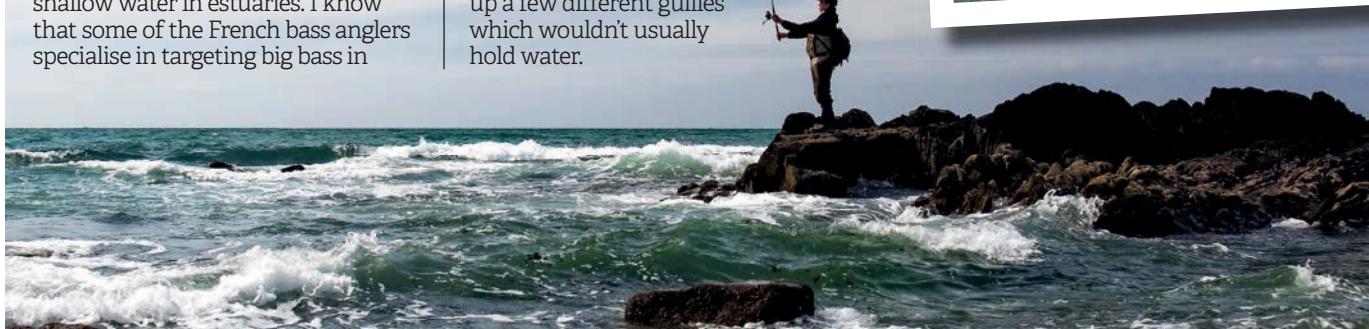
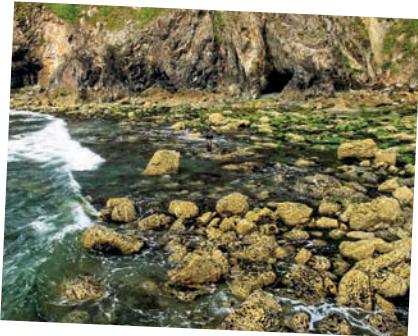
Q How shallow is too shallow for bass fishing?

MICHAEL HARRIS, WEST SUSSEX

HG says: Sometimes it amazes me how shallow the ground can be where you might find bass, indeed I actively don't target what I would call deep water for bass from the shore at all. I am sure that plenty of us here have caught bass from very shallow reefs for starters, but how shallow is too shallow? I reckon at night especially that it's very easy to spook bass which could be moving in very shallow water, very close to shore, so I would advise you against turning up on a beach in the dark and wading out to cast. What about the shallow water literally right in front of you? Also have a close and deliberate look at shallow water in estuaries. I know that some of the French bass anglers specialise in targeting big bass in

shallow estuaries, and for the life of me I can't think why we don't have a serious go at this more often.

One sort of area I will deliberately target is when I get very shallow water on a beach which suddenly gives way to a deeper gutter which might run parallel to the actual beach. When the sea is fizzed up a bit during the day, I will tend to try and hold one of the Gravity Stick Paddletails or Slender Scoop Shads in the backwash created by the differences in depth. It's electric when you get hit by a bass while fishing like this. Keep an eye on the really big spring tides because they may well fill up a few different gullies which wouldn't usually hold water.



Q I have a growing feeling that lure colours can make a real difference for pollack fishing. What do you think?

BOB PHELPS, DORSET



HG says: For a species of fish which can often be so willing to hit a lure, it surprises me how pollack seem to respond to changing things up so much. I often find that when the pollack are really feeding hard say on a mark on the quiet west coast of Ireland, sometimes the fish suddenly go quiet when up until then we have been catching them with no great problem.



It has happened so many times that I then change the colour of the lure, say from pink to black/orange or red/orange, and bang the pollack are back on the feed. I have to put this down to the colour of the lure because changing the colour produced fish again. It isn't always the case though, and sometimes I find that really slowing down the speed of retrieve can trigger pollack to come back on the strike. If I am deliberately targeting pollack then I will definitely carry a few different colours of lures like the Savage Gear Savage Minnow Weedless or Sandeel V2 Weedless. The Fiiish Crazy Sandeel is an absolutely deadly pollack lure when you fish it with a sink and draw retrieve – the pollack will hit you on the drop – and likewise I will carry a few different colours.

Q&A

LIGHT ROCK FISHING

Q Can you please explain what the Ecogear Aqua Shirasu is and where to find them?

STUART SHIPTON, UK

BB says: Ah, the mighty Shirasu, often the most effective lure in my arsenal, especially when times are tough. They are made of the same material as Isome, so will pull off the hook quite easily by an enthusiastic bite, so it can be quite expensive to use regularly. Yet, the scent and texture combined with the tiny ball tail seems to attract all species. I fish these either in open water for the pelagic species or on the bottom for the gobies, wrasse and scops'. They work fantastic rigged on jig heads, dropshot, Carolinas and even scaled down Texas rigs. They aren't easy to get hold of these days but small online shops such as japanjonnylerfer.bigcartel.com are your best bets.



Q What size snap would you recommend for a 1.5g jig?

TODD BEAL, USA

BB says: You either like snaps or you don't. I'm a big fan of their convenience when changing lures rapidly, which I often do to find what the fish want. When using micro metals around 1.5g, I don't want a snap that's as big as my lure, so I go for the XUL and ooo sizes from brands such as Gurza and Decoy, they just don't fail me. If your eyesight isn't the best, you may struggle with tiniest snaps, so either get the reading glasses out or go a size up!



Q I would like advice on tides. When I go to the coast I check the tide tables and see times and what type of tide to expect, but I'd like to know how you approach tides in relation to tactics and species.

JAMES WATTON, UK

BB says: It is common to assume that high tide is the only time we can fish, but that couldn't be further from the truth, in fact sometimes the lowest tides can produce the best Lerfing. Big spring tides give us access to ground that is usually impossible to get to and sight fishing, either in the day or the night, can be the best way to approach this. Hunting in these shallows we can find topknot and specialities such as the leopard spot goby. As the tide rushes back on these huge tides, this can be difficult to fish ultralight in, but will create eddies and backwaters where predators will lurk. I fish my 5-7g metals and 2-3inch soft plastics on jig heads at this time, aiming for bass, mackerel and flounder. For neap tides, when there's very little movement in the water, the larger predators no longer have an advantage and the micro species can be especially active. This can lead to bumper sessions on the tiniest lures, fished slowly amongst the cover or skinned across the sand.



SEA SCHOOL

How to make your own winning rigs

PART
16

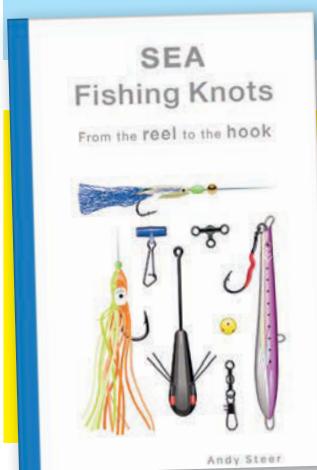
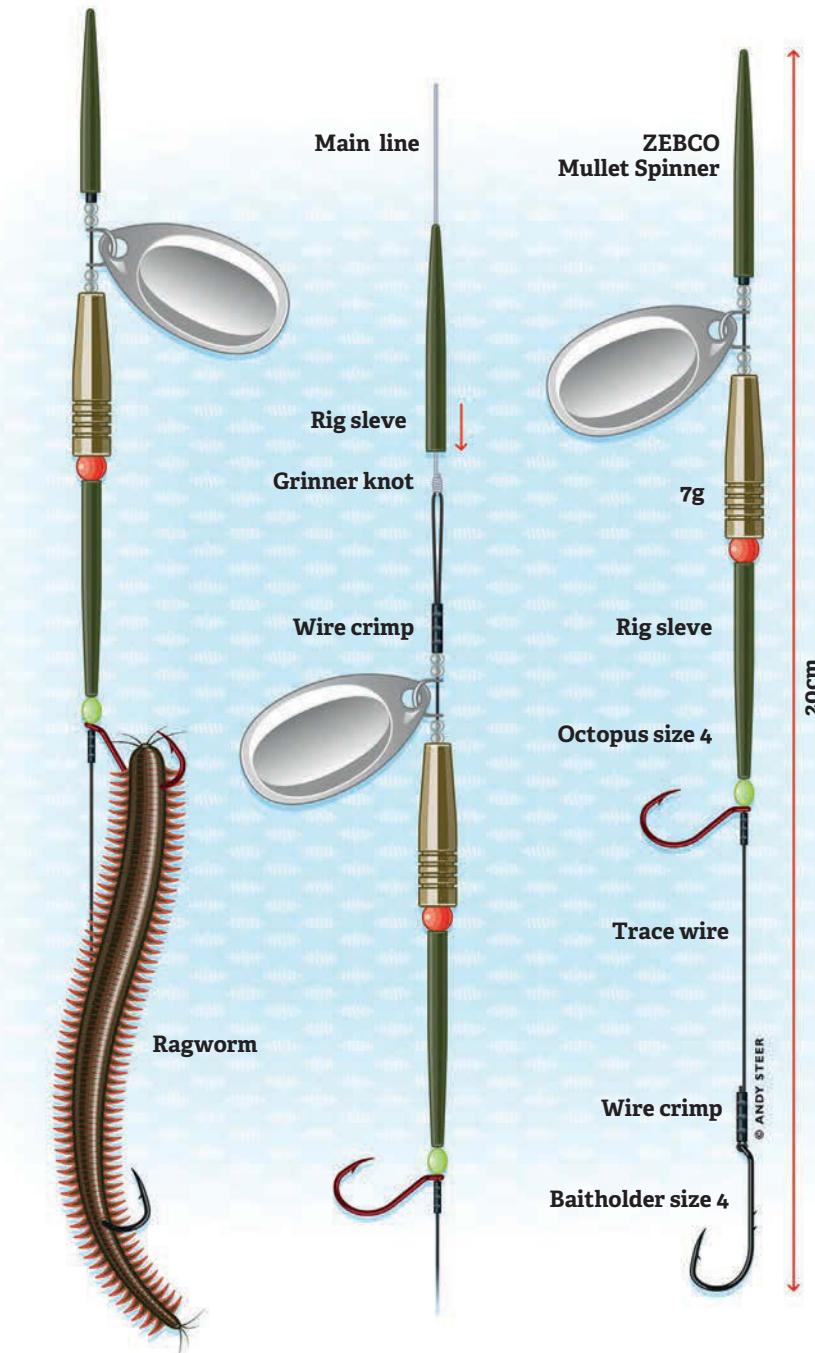
Artwork by Andy Steer

THE MULLET SPINNER

Grey mullet, particularly thin-lipped mullet, can often be caught during the summer months on baited spinners. Various versions of these spinners can be bought but it is also pretty straightforward to adapt a conventional spinner and create your own. The addition of the bait is essential in order to entice the thin-lips, and harbour rag (maddies) or a section of king rag is the best bait to use. The combination of the fluttering spoon on the spinner and the scent of the ragworms often proves irresistible and may pick up other species such as flounder and sea trout. This example uses the Zebco Mullet Spinner.

Step-by-step

1. Tie your mainline to the crimped wire loop on the spinner using a grinner knot. The knot and wire loop can then be covered by the rig sleeve.
2. The spinner should include a spoon that will rotate when retrieved.
3. Pre-made mullet spinners will have two hooks (often size 4) mounted below on the spinner, either on a wire or fluorocarbon 10cm hook length, one at either end of the wire or fluoro. The second hook improves hook-ups dramatically as mullet have a habit of nibbling at the tail section of the worm when mounted on a single hook.
4. The ragworm is then mounted on the rig by being nicked through the head section on the top hook and through the tail section on the lower hook. It is important to ensure the bait doesn't slide onto the lower hook. This will obscure the hook point and impede the action of the spinner when retrieved.



SEA FISHING KNOTS - FROM THE REEL TO THE HOOK

Contains clear, concise, easy to follow step-by-step knot-tying illustrations by Andy Steer of recommended sea fishing/big game fishing knots and set-ups. This publication should help you to gain a solid base of reliable, tried and tested knots, enabling you to land more fish. It will also help you protect the environment and save money by losing less tackle.

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- A proper fishing rod that is an excellent stepping stone to a more advanced setup.



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- Cloth bag

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The 8000 is ideal for beachcasters and surf rods.

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FIRST LOOK

Your update on the latest gear arriving in the tackle shops



COX & RAWLE DONGLE RIGS

These rigs feature some of the highest quality components, including the Mutsu circle hooks, stainless steel swivels and impact release clips. A dongle allows you to firmly attach a bait beneath a single circle hook for distance casting and this mechanism works together perfectly with circle hook technology. If you believe in a good catch and release policy, we recommend giving the Cox and Rawle dongle rigs a try.

- Sizes available: 2/O - 6/O
- Highest quality components
- Featuring the new dongle clip
- RRP: £3.75

LOON FISHING HOOK SHARPENER

Connect with more bites and have confidence when you fish with this stainless steel fishing hook sharpener with comfy grip and medium and fine sharpening surfaces. Many anglers forget how important it is to ensure hook points are sharpened regularly and blunt hooks account for a large proportion of missed bites. The Loon hook sharpener includes a steel tether and an unconditional guarantee.

- Two different grits
- Keeps hooks sharp
- Increase hook-up rate
- RRP: £9.99
- www.rokmax.com



SHAKESPEARE MACKEREL FEATHER: COLOURED

Shakespeare SALT rigs cover the majority of European sea fishing from both shore and boat. All rigs have been developed in cooperation with top sea anglers and contain rigs for every saltwater challenge. These mackerel feathers have been made with high quality components and are tied on a 70lb monofilament and perfect for distance casting.

- Strong and robust
- Made from high quality components
- Suitable for distance casting
- RRP: £2.99



JIGABITE JIG WRAP

The must have accessory for jigging. To prevent damage and injury with a heavy jig rigged with treble or assist hooks, simply insert the jig and wrap around the rod to transport safely. The jig wrap is available in two colours; red and blue.

- RRP: £2.99
- www.jigabite.co.uk

SAVAGE GEAR 3D MACK STICK

The Savage Gear 3D Mack Stick has a strong ABS body, based on a 3D Scan of a real mackerel, with superb details, super stick bait action and an unpredictable and lively action on retrieve and jerk. It also features Wired thru technology for extra strength and is rigged with doubled Double X-strong forged split rings and SGY 4X trebles. It is available in four different patterns to choose from.

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- Weight: 50g & 88g
- RRP: £16.99



RATING SYSTEM

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Some products reviewed will be awarded a star rating ranging from 0-5.

OKUMA ROCKAWAY REEL

There are three reels in the Rockaway range, including one Baitfeeder version, with a graphite frame, anodised aluminium spool and a 5.3:1 gear ratio. The 6000 version weighs 486g, has a 12kg maximum drag, holds 370m of 0.30mm mono line and sells for £69.99. The 8000 reel weighs 531g, has a maximum drag of 16kg, holds 440m of 0.33mm mono line and costs £72.99. Both have four ball bearings and one roller bearing, along with quick-set anti-reverse. The 8000 Baitfeeder version, costing £86.99, has five ball bearings, one roller bearing, weighs 586g, has a maximum drag of 16kg and holds 440m of 0.33mm line.

■ RRP: from £69.99
■ www.okumafishing.com



SEA SCHOOL

How to improve your casting skills

Words: John Holden

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Rod advice or where to buy,
email: seafishing@century.uk
Website: www.century.uk

Century

OLD RODS REBORN

Refurbishing an old rod can be very rewarding and a cheap way of building a custom rod to suit your needs – John Holden explains how

Renovating an old beach caster is a fine way to learn rod building. There are thousands of great rods to choose from boot sales and online.

Tackle shops often have a dusty selection somewhere out back. The biggest expense will probably be a set of decent rings; the rod itself and other bits and pieces are cheap as chips. But which rod to choose?

With some of the classics now making serious money, it's risky to dive into a rebuild without understanding that collectors prefer a rod in original condition or restored to perfect condition. Failing to use the right rings, whipping thread and decals guarantees hacking the value towards zero. Desirable classics including the Daiwa 129PM, specialist Zziplex and Century rods, Abu 484 and the like are therefore best avoided as a beginner's project.

Since a rebuild is likely to be a rod you're going to use, it makes sense to find one that fits the bill in length, action and casting weight. Nothing beats a Conoflex Cod 5

or Cod 6. They're lovely blanks, easy to work on and highly rewarding to cast and fish with, even today. The majority were supplied as blanks and build either by the DIY fisherman or by tackle dealers who tailored the finished rod for the local market.

Most of these glass rods are two-piece joined by a spigot. Blank integrity is the vital issue: reject anything with cracks, deep scratches and signs of wall delamination. Worn spigots often "tick" a little when a rod is flexed, but that can normally be corrected. Although minor splits in the blank wall on the female side of the joint can be fixed, repair is better avoided on a first project.

Rebuilding is really simple if you're happy with a neat, practical rod rather than custom art. Take off the old rings and whippings, rub off old varnish with fine wet-and-dry paper dampened with soapy water. Clean off the handle. You may not want to put a new handle on straight away; that's always an option for later. Personally, I like my Cod series rods with

carbon handles rather than the original alloy or glass.

Reasonably good old rings - no cracked liners and broken frames - may as well go back on. Even so, these old Conoflexes more than deserve a set of modern rings. A 12mm tip and six side rings ranging from 12mm to 30mm at the butt work well. Spacings are not critical, so either follow the original spacing or simply adjust the rings so that the line follows the curve of the rod when it is under pressure.

Genuine rod whipping thread is well worth the money because it makes the work easier and does not go whiskery when the finish goes on. High Build two-part finish seals complete the whippings. Hot Araldite Clear brushed well in is an excellent but less slick option. As for the blank, some people varnish, advanced builders use high-build finish and I rub in a few coats of polymer car wax. New shrink tube on the handle looks smart, and you can use a screw seat or coasters as you prefer. Enjoy your new rod. ■



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Words and
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DAVE LEWIS





SEADRA AQUA DROP

Dave Lewis casts an expert eye over a new range of slow jigs designed for bass fishing but equally suited for other species in the UK and overseas

Seadra Aqua-Drop Slow Jigs have been designed specifically for bass, but of course these beautifully finished lures will prove to be the downfall of many other species, wherever in the world they are used. The Seadra Aqua-Drop range is available in four different sizes, 100, 130, 160 and 200g. Colours include Cotton Candy, Blue/White, Holo Silver, White Pearl and both blue and green mackerel.

Each lure comes ready rigged with a pair of the correct size assist hooks, which are attached to a solid stainless-steel ring. The leader at the end

of your usually braided line, either fluorocarbon or monofilament, should be tied directly to the solid ring to create an incredibly strong link between leader and hooks. The actual lure is attached to the solid ring using a stainless-steel split ring. This means that, when necessary, it is now possible to change lures without cutting and retying the leader, by using a suitable pair of split ring pliers to remove the existing lure from the split ring, then attach the new one.

Seadra Aqua-Drop Slow Jigs are obviously a great choice of lure wherever fishing wrecks or reefs here in the UK. If you are planning to fish

at either Norway or Iceland these will certainly catch a multitude of fish. I am looking forward to trialling mine during various trips to the tropics over the coming months. ■

Available from VMO, Seadra Aqua-Drop Jigs retail for a very reasonable £8.99 to 11.99, price dependent on size. To order or for more information visit Veals Mail Order at: www veals co uk



Henry Gilbey explains why the IMA Hound 125F Glide quickly became one of his go-to lures for bass fishing

RELEASE THE HOUND



For 10 years the amazing IMA Hound 125F Glide has been my go-to hard lure for rough conditions and strong winds.

Known simply as the Hound Glide, I knew from day one, and my first bass on this lure, that I had something special in my hands when I was able to put the lure near to a rock I had never reached with a regular minnow-type hard lure. The fact that a 6lb bass then jumped on the lure really made my day, and the Hound Glide has been a staple part of my bass fishing ever since. The biggest bass I have ever seen caught was taken on a Hound Glide over in Ireland in a strong run of current at the mouth of an estuary.

ACTION

The IMA Hound 125F Glide is a floating hard lure which is 125mm long, weighs 20g and is quoted at swimming from 70-100cm deep. I can get the Hound Glide to swim a bit shallower by fishing with my rod tip up and slowing my retrieve down, but it's not meant to be what I would call a shallow-diver, and the reason this lure 'grips' so incredibly well into some surprisingly turbulent conditions is partly because it swims that bit deeper. In many respects the actual action on the Hound Glide looks pretty similar to plenty of other hard lures, but because this one casts so well into a headwind, grips so incredibly well in very bouncy conditions, plus swings and swims really well in current, this makes it a really successful lure for me because I am often turning to it more than a lot of other options.

COLOURS

Available in a range of different colours (I particularly like the cotton candy, white and mackerel colours), the Hound Glide comes rigged with three size 4 treble hooks which are much better quality now than they were when the lure first hit the market. I remove the middle treble hook because I don't like bass fishing with three

sets of trebles, and particularly on a hard lure which is only 125mm long. I have fished with this lure so much now that I can safely say to you that removing the treble makes no difference at all to the action or hooking abilities of the Hound Glide.

DISTANCE

At first glance the Hound Glide is like many other bass lures, but it isn't. I know that distance is never everything in bass fishing, but I have not yet come across a hard lure around the 125mm size which can cover so much water for me, and also fly so well into strong headwinds and then grip into rough seas. I don't quite know how IMA have achieved so much with a modest size hard lure, and my understanding is that the Hound Glide never really caught on in Japan and IMA only list it now for sale into foreign territories. Their loss is our gain if you ask me. I fish with lures I trust, and for 10 years I have kept my eyes and ears open to see if I could find a comparable lure which would do the same and possibly more for me than the IMA Hound 125F Glide. I haven't found it yet. The Hound Glide is awesome. ■

■ Available from gerrysfishing.com

■ RRP £19.99





GRAUVELL TEKLON SURF COMPETITION II

In the world of expensive rods, one model stood out.
Tony Burman investigated and nearly got his fingers burnt...



More than 10 years ago a new beach rod with a staggering price tag of £1,000 came on the scene. It was the Grauvell Teklon Surf Competition II, which was like a multiple kit because there was another section, called a carrier, for fitting any of three smaller tips and two match tips.

Made of ultra-high modulus 72-ton carbon in four conical layers, the Spanish company's rod came in 4250 (14ft) or 4500 (15ft) versions. It was fitted with top quality Fuji low rider guides and screw-winch reel seat. Rated for casting lead weights of three ounces to eight ounces (100-250g), the rod was very well

made but was it worth it? It got the glowing approval of some top international match anglers as the rod to use with fixed-spool reels and also for being versatile enough to cover many fishing scenarios. Where I live on the Lincolnshire coast, local match angler Jeff Volley splashed out on one. It suited his style of fishing, especially for smaller fish and he had a lot of success in local matches with this rod. In fact he still does and uses the same rod today.

A few years ago some started to appear on various online sales sites and, seemingly, you could get one for around £150. I decided it was too good an opportunity to miss and got the Teklon Surf II Competition 4250.

The three-piece rod arrived with a hollow tip that was exceptionally stiff and hardly bent. Great when grunt was needed, but what was I going to do with it?

I contacted Grauvell and was told I needed the tip carrier system, which I discovered would cost £240. The carrier arrived with three small fibre glass tips, which are for normal beach conditions. Where were the match tips that I thought came with the carrier? It seems the match tips were extra, costing £140 for the two. This was turning out to be very expensive. However, I managed to get them for £80. They were very similar to the quiver tips I use for my coarse fishing, which cost around £20 each.

ON THE BEACH

After an outlay of £470 what had I got for my money? Without the match tips the rod would have been a disappointment for me. With the match tips, the rod suddenly came alive and, hopefully, would be ideal for fishing for flatfish and small fish at my local beaches. I have since seen deals with the carrier and all five tips.

With the original tip, the rod was seriously stiff and hardly bent so casting would be interesting. A large fixed-spool reel was attached to the rod and a gentle swing resulted in a four-ounce weight flying away. However, it was the match tips I was more interested in and so off I went for a fishing session. It performed like a dream when casting a three-ounce weight with fragile baits like maddies. A gentle flick produced an easy 60yds and there was definitely plenty in reserve.

Three ounces was about enough when using the yellow, lighter tip, which responded well with even lighter lead weights that can be needed when the fishing gets hard. The stiffer orange tip could handle a heavier lead, but whatever choice of tip it must be remembered



The Teklon range
specialise in multi-
tip rods

that they are not for powerful casting. An overhead cast still produces distances of 100yds, which is usually enough when targeting the smaller fish.

Bite indication on the various tips was very good. With a fish on, I feel every movement and it brings a lot more enjoyment to the fishing especially if using braid. Hook a bonus fish, like a bass, and the rod handles it with ease. On one occasion when a smoothhound snaffled my bait the rod tip bent but there was still plenty in reserve.

JEKYLL & HYDE

Is the rod worth its original heavy price tag? In a word, no. In fairness though, it is made of first-class materials which is nothing less than I'd expect. This rod was well ahead of other manufacturers at the time, but it's a Jekyll and Hyde character. For my fishing, it is possibly one of the best rods that I have handled when using the match tips for smaller fish. Its stronger end section means you get a rod that will cast a long way too.

My mate Jeff, who splashed out on his Teklon Surf years ago, has found different tips from other manufacturers fit his rod and they were a lot cheaper. For instance, Tronixpro Medusa tips fit but they're hard to find too. It seems Grauvell lacks a presence in the UK now, although a few new Teklons are seen on some shop websites. Look out for them on the second-hand market where they are still fetching a good price.

A very similar rod in quality and build is the Grauvell Teklon Surf One 4250 (14ft 4in), made with high performance carbon, which has the carrier system because it is sold as a multi-tip rod. This rod is a gold colour rather than red. They are supplied with the shorter fibre glass tips and are still advertised on some tackle websites. I've seen these recently online for £680. Having been told that the match tips would not fit the Surf One, I found they do.

Top quality multi-tip rods, of which there are several on the market, are useful to have in the bag if conditions change. If you have to go lighter or heavier, you have the tips to suit. At the moment the Teklon Surf rod will remain in my bag and is a go-to choice when conditions allow. ■

Words and images: Mike Thrussell

THE KIT YOU NEED FOR...

ESTUARY MULLET

Estuaries and their secluded harbours offer the very best chance to catch grey mullet. They are resident from April onwards with the best period from August through to October. They are a shy and nervous fish with a reputation for being hard to catch but with a logical approach and the right tackle you'll stack the odds in your favour



SUNGASSES

Mullet are usually easy to see if on the surface as they leave an obvious wake when cruising about. If the fish are deeper in the water column, polaroid sunglasses are an essential tool to help you locate the fish and give you an idea at what depth to start at. The sunglasses also help you see how the fish are approaching your bait and if they are looking but shying away indicating they realise something is wrong and you need to adapt to catch them.

■ BIG DOG POLAROID SKATE SUNGLASSES
RRP £24.99



REELS

Fixed spool reels in the 4000 to 5000 sizing are perfect for virtually all mullet situations. Look for a line capacity in the 4000 of around 240yds of 0.28mm line (8/10lbs) and a little over 200yd of 0.35mm (15lb line) for the 5000. The 4000 is the best all-round choice, but if you need to ledger fish or use bigger, heavier floats at longer range into harbours and bays, then the 5000 will help gain that extra distance.

■ PENN FIERCE 111 4000 RRP £97.99



HOOKS

Look to the freshwater market for hooks with one of the most popular, the Kamasan B980 in size 6 to 8 being the go-to pattern. This sizing is ideal for presenting bread and small worm baits, also small fish strips. If you're struggling to connect with delicate mullet bites, reduce bait and hook size to a 10 or 12, and reduce the hook length breaking strain to 4lb. Both these adjustments can make a huge difference.

■ KAMASAN B980 SPECIMEN EYED HOOK 10 PER PACKET RRP £1.95



BAITS

Cheap doughy loaves work for mullet. Break off a piece about the size of a 50p piece, fold it over the hook, crimp the edges down making it look much the same as a pasty. Small chunks of king rag are good, especially over rocky, muddy areas. Maddie rag work well too, especially ledger fished and popped up with a flat bead just off the bottom. Mullet respond well to groundbait. A simple mix of bread crumb mixed with a couple of tins of sardines/pilchards or a mackerel that's been allowed to soften and then crushed up with the hands and added to the bread mash. Put this in a small mesh bag and hang it in the tide flow or throw it in as small balls to break up on the seabed.

RODS

Mullet rods need to ideally fall between 11 and 12ft in length. Look for a softish tip section but with quickly increasing power into the mid and butt section. Big mullet fight hard and you'll need that power lower down to work the fish and steer it away from snags. Rods with two or three alternative tips are popular nowadays as they can cover both ledger and float fishing with the different tips designed to cast different weights. Soft tip sections give better bite indication, but more importantly, they cushion the initial pressure the mullet can feel when it sucks in the bait, and this can increase your catch ratio.

■ TRONIX BANZAI MULLET TRIPLE TIP 12FT 2-4OZ RRP £119.99

MAINLINE & HOOKLENGTH

For general float fishing use a fluorocarbon mainline of about 8lbs. Mullet have excellent eyesight, and this is one situation where the fluorocarbon's ability to hide better in the water is a major advantage. For ledger fishing in deeper water or at longer range, use 15lb braid, but add a short 6ft 15lb to 20lb fluorocarbon leader depending on the lead size being cast. The hook length should also be fluorocarbon. Six pounds is a good starting point but be prepared to drop to 4lb if bites are difficult or the fish are sucking in but spitting the bait out quickly with minimal float movement.

■ BERKLEY TRILENE 100% FLUOROCARBON 8LB 50M RRP £7.99

FLOATS

Freshwater loaded carp Waggler floats are perfect for mullet. The longer versions rated to 3g are good in choppy conditions, but in calm seas look to a smaller lighter clear insert Waggler carrying say 1.2g. They also take a couple more additional shot on the hook length, and this allows you to space the shot apart and slow or speed up the drop of the bait through the water column. At longer range, cigar shaped floats with a round-ball weight to position them work well but need to be weighted right down to minimise the pressure needed to pull them under for good bite detection.

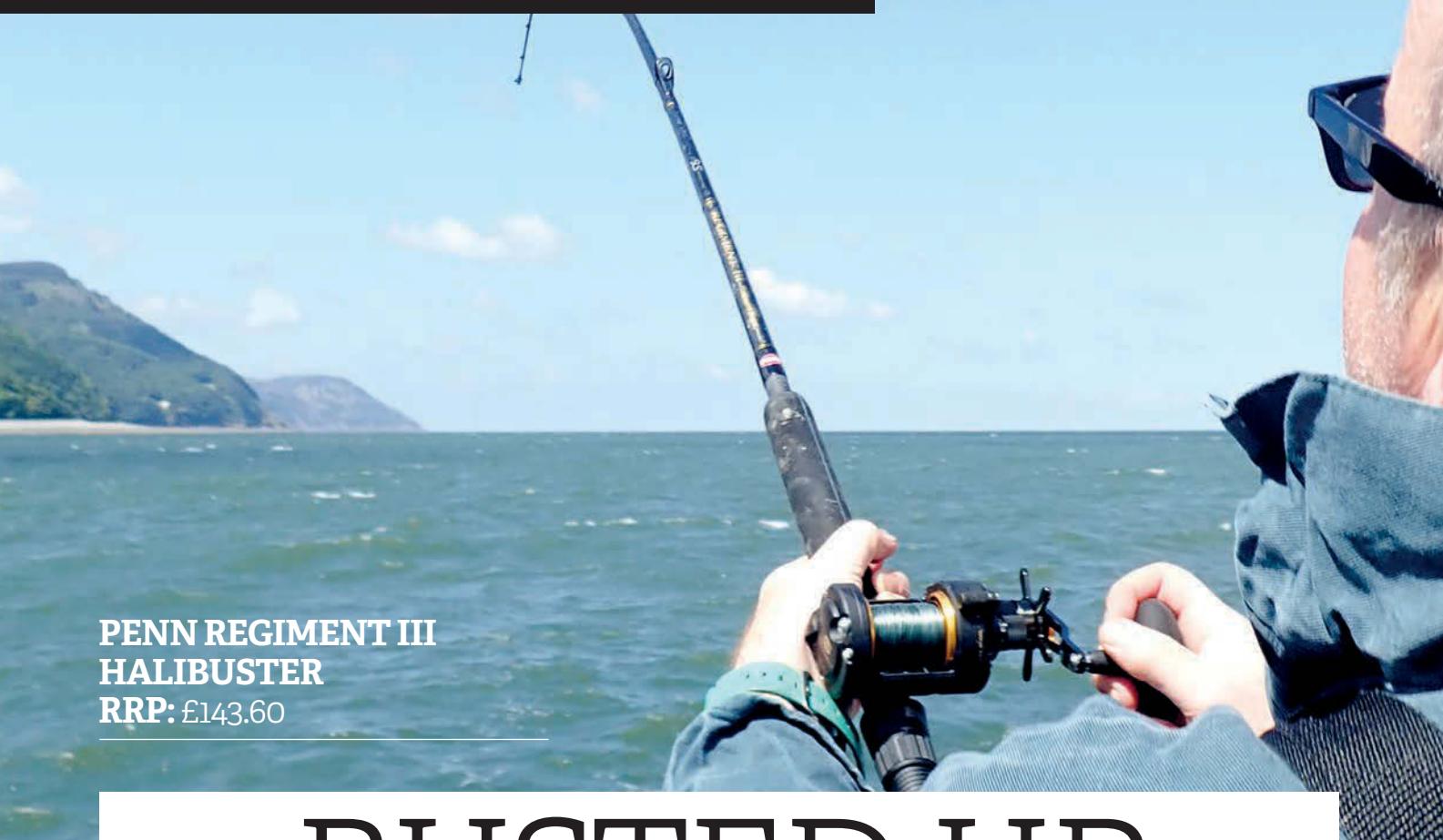


■ DRENNAN CRYSTAL WAGGLERS RRP £2.15/2.45

RIGS



Use rubber float stops either side of the Waggler float and add a small size 10 swivel to connect the hook length to. Then add shot to weight the float correctly as required. The rubber stops let you adjust the depth the bait sits below the float. Use two stops above the float if you need more grip when casting into wind and so on. The cigar floats need a bead above them, then the float, another bead and a swivel tying in place. Above the top bead tie in a separate Grinner knot from mono or Powergum to act as a sliding float stop. Add your hook length to the swivel. An easy ledger rig is a small swivel link sliding on the mainline stopped by a bead and then tie on a swivel. The hook length should be 6lb fluorocarbon around 15 to 18in long. Play around with the length of the hook length until you get bites.



**PENN REGIMENT III
HALIBUSTER**
RRP: £143.60

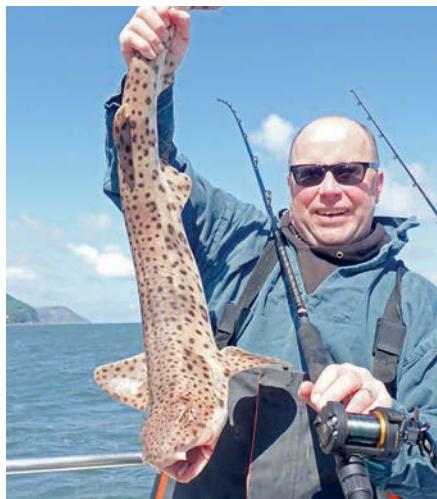
BUSTED UP



Dave Roberts, skipper of Bristol Channel-based boat Alykat, gives his verdict on the new PENN Regiment III Halibuster boat rod range

Although we do not experience a regular migration of halibut in the Bristol Channel, I'm certain that this rod will be more than a match for any that the discerning angler may encounter!

We took the Halibuster 20-30lb boat rod out in search of some of our heavier species of fish. Fishing hard on the bottom, we soon found a large pack of marauding bull huss, ideal for the job in hand. Straight out of the rod bag, the Halibuster gave a reassuring impression. The blank is made from high modulus 30T carbon and the SLS 3 construction makes for a super thin yet powerful body. The HD DPS screw up reel seat holds the reel firmly, while the attractive SW proof 'Seaguide' guides cover the blank perfectly. The guides are fitted stylishly, which is becoming the norm from the PENN boat rod stable. The ergonomic HD EVA handles and cross gimbal fitting complete the armoury of this new model.



Overall, I would be confident to use this rod on any species found in British waters. If it is a gigantic halibut you're after, then go ahead, give it a try though I think I would choose the 30-50lb version. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

- Available in 20-30lb and 30-50lb
- Length: 2.4m
- sections: 1+1
- Guides: 10 including tip
- Blank construction: High modulus 30t carbon
- Fast action
- EVA handle
- Reel seat: HD DPS
- Cross gimbal
- www.penn-fishing.co.uk

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BIG OLD FAT FEMALE FISH

The science and policy boffins at BASS explain why Big Old Fat Fecund Female Fish (BOFFFFs) are so important to the future of all our bass fishing

In the previous issue of Sea Angler we discussed that the Bass Fishery Management Plan (BFMP) is a front-runner in the post-Brexit era of UK fisheries management, so at this time it is very topical, with stakeholder opinions being sought via Policy Lab who are conducting the first phases of the consultation and stakeholder engagement process.

Our position is that we first of all need a concerted effort to rebuild bass stocks to where they were before commercial overfishing caused the decline in the bass spawning stock; reducing it to the lowest levels within living memory and causing the imposition of some stringent management measures to save the bass spawning stocks from collapse.

So let's take a look at one of the spawning stock misconceptions to look out for and what a suitable suggestion might be.

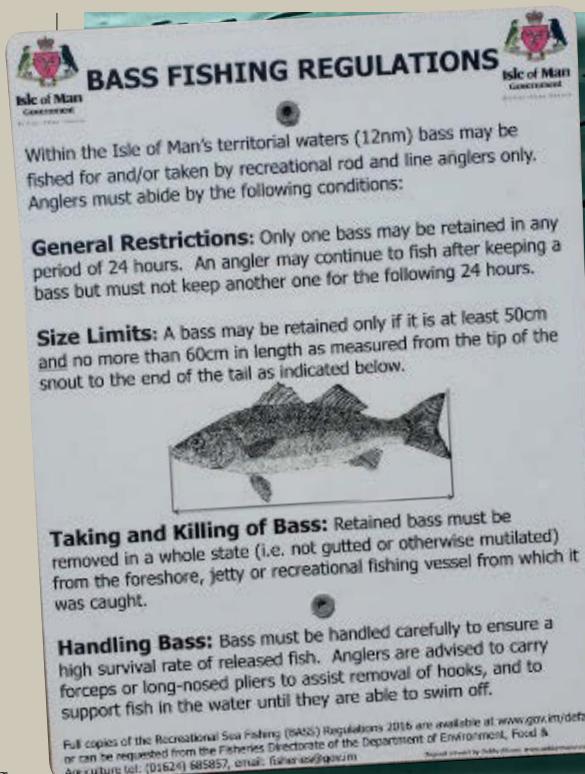
SIZE IS EVERYTHING

It's noticeable that spawning-stock biomass is almost always regarded as being reproductively the same, no matter what its size composition. Many small young females are wrongly assumed to contribute the same to stock productivity as an equivalent mass of what fisheries scientists call BOFFFFs (big old fat fecund female fish – which are large, older, female fish that are at the peak of their reproductive capacity).

Consequently, BOFFFFs are harvested commercially with no more regard than smaller, less productive fish. However, recent science shows that there are a number of ways in which BOFFFFs can be protected from exploitation and this in turn would improve the productivity and the stability of the stock.

SLOT SIZE AND RESERVES

Two examples are slot limits and marine reserves. The Isle of Man is very much forward-thinking in this regard and has a Legal Retention Slot for bass of 50-60cm already in place for its recreational fishery.



This not only ensures that BOFFFFs are protected, it also ensures that any fish removed from the spawning stock biomass will have had the chance to spawn at least once, since a bass of 48cm is certain to be sexually mature for at least one breeding season. However, the current UK Minimum Conservation Reference Size of 42cm is not sufficient to ensure that harvested fish will have spawned.



Establishing a carefully selected network of no-take marine reserves could help in two further distinct ways.

- Firstly, marine reserves provide a sanctuary and ensure that BOFFFFs survive throughout their natural geographic range, when the reserves are located correctly and are numerous enough.
- Secondly, marine reserves are known to "seed" surrounding areas by dispersal of young fish and of course, other marine organisms as well. Implementing both of these measures for bass would undoubtedly improve the spawning stock biomass (currently around 50% of the estimated levels of 1986*) which would be advantageous for all stakeholders in the bass fishery.

SCIENCE SUPPORT

The importance of large female fish within a stock biomass was first reported well over 100 years ago (Hjort 1914) but it is only relatively recently that scientists are starting to understand and fully appreciate how important such fish actually are.

In a great many fish species, including European bass, BOFFFFs produce more and very often larger eggs compared to smaller but mature sized fish and once hatched, the offspring of BOFFFFs frequently display faster growth and better survival rates.

As can be seen above, a European bass that is 80cm in length (approximately 5kgs) produces nearly three times as many eggs as a fish just 20cm shorter and over seven times as many as a fish of 40cm (approximately 0.7kgs).

Moreover, BOFFFFs have a tendency towards an earlier and longer spawning season and since large fish are more robust than smaller fish, BOFFFFs can also spawn in locations that smaller fish can't. Thus, BOFFFFs help to ensure individual reproductive success in environments that other fish may not be able to reproduce in.

Similarly, BOFFFFs can survive periods that aren't conducive to successful reproduction and in doing so, enhance recruitment when conditions return to normal. This is termed "the storage effect". It is also known that removing BOFFFFs, by using non-selective fishing methods for example, destabilizes fished populations and increases susceptibility of collapse even after fishing effort is later reduced, further illustrating BOFFFF importance to populations.

So, one can see why it is critically important that as many BOFFFFs remain part of the spawning-stock biomass as possible in order to maximise recruitment.

A Bass Fishery Management Plan would do well to take into account that BOFFFFs are an important element of the stock biomass that can benefit bass anglers and all fishers alike.

References:

- Hixon et al, ICES Journal of Marine Science, Volume 71, Issue 8, October 2014, Pages 2171–2185
- Lavin et al, Proc Biol Sci. 2021 Mar 10:288
- *ICES/CIEM advice on sea bass for areas North Sea, English Channel, Irish Sea, Bristol Channel, Celtic Sea 2021

Policy Lab is seeking what they term 'Lived Experiences' from recreational and commercial fishermen, so if you have been fishing for bass for a number of years, here is your chance to tell your story. Why do you fish for bass, have you noticed any changes in the numbers or sizes of the bass that you catch and what are your hopes for the Bass Fisheries Management Plan and for the future of bass fishing?

You can email your lived experiences to Policy Lab at bass@policylab.gov.uk



■ Keep up-to-date with BASS through its blog on www.ukbass.com or on Facebook or Twitter



BETTER CALL SAUL

Top shore match angler and 2021 Penn Sea League winner, Saul Page, shares his MATCH TIPS on improving your match skills and what you need to do to compete at the highest level

RESEARCH

I start by doing my research and finding out which venue I'm going to fish. When I've established this I research what the target species are, the state of tide we are going to be fishing and what the best bait is going to be. I call people around the country to get this information.

As you get involved in the match circuit and travel around the country to matches you get to make friends and acquaintances with other anglers. That all adds into the arsenal about finding out about other venues. Once you've got contacts, which is quite easy if you show an interest and passion, then most people are happy to share information with you.

RIGS & BAIT

I've got the knowledge and experience now to know which rigs and baits will work for particular species and particular venues. I'll make a plan from the information I've been told. I'll have a set of rigs I'm confident with but I'll also have some others if I've been given some

information. This might involve adding some pop-ups, changing the hook size, hook diameter, or making the rig lighter, or longer.

I collect my own bait myself. Finding the ideal tides and times to get the right baits might mean going out at 1am on a Monday morning to get the best age of worm for the weekend. Most tackle shops can source anything you need, so if you can develop a good rapport with the owner it helps when sourcing anything you can't get yourself. If you are getting fresh wild bait then it pretty much works anywhere, but if there's a local bait I need then I will source it through someone I know and perhaps do a bait swap with them.

GAME PLAN

In advance of a match I'll draw on all the information I've gathered and all my experience fishing similar venues, or for similar species, and come up with my plan A as to how I'm going to fish it. I'll also have a plan B, C and D just in case I need them.

A lot of anglers go to a match and are afraid

to ask questions. If you are a club angler going into the open scene it can be quite daunting to get into what they call the "match circle". If I meet new anglers on the beach I'll always introduce myself and open up a route for them to ask questions so they feel more comfortable asking questions and getting involved in the general banter.

ON THE PEG

I'll fish from a shelter with my baits, rig wallets and tackle box set out, visible and easy to hand. It's all about being efficient and as quick as possible. I use a system I call the loop. I have three rigs ready at any one time; one in the water that I'm fishing with, one baited ready to go out and just before I reel in I'll bait a third rig. The reason I do this is in case I cast out the pre-baited second rig, get a bird's nest and crack off, I'll then have the third rig to immediately clip on to my spare rod to cast out without wasting any fishing time. I'll always make sure I've got that loop of three rigs to minimise anything that could waste any time.





Saul fishing
a match at
Bossington

NEXT DOOR PEG

It can also help your fishing if you are next to someone who is a similar standard to yourself and is efficient and experienced in the process of witnessing and signing your card. If you are placed next to someone who is new to it then it's in your interests to help them to understand it as quickly and easily as you can. The more efficient they are, the more efficient they make you! It's not all about your draw in a match but also about who draws next to you. An experienced angler is going to be on point like you. If they aren't experienced you are going to need to do a little bit more to help them out and get them up to speed which makes it better for them and your fishing flows faster as they begin to work more efficiently.

DON'T BE SHY

One thing I have always done which I was told to do as a youngster is to introduce yourself, shake their hand and say hello to the steward and your fellow anglers. It puts them at ease and breaks the ice and they know immediately they can speak to you and ask any questions. I've learnt everything I know from asking questions and people sharing information with me. The late Ian Golds always used to say to me, "ask me anything you want to know, after I've finished fishing". He wanted to win during the match but was very happy to share any knowledge and information after the competition had finished. I try to do the same thing.

SPORTSMANSHIP

You don't have to be an ass about things. We are all competitive but if I can help a fellow competitor I will. The angler next to me ran out of lug during a match in Hythe. I gave him two wraps of lug so he could carry on fishing. I didn't want him at the end of the match saying that I beat him because he ran out of bait. If he was doing well I wanted to beat him fair and square by something I had done more effectively rather than simply because I had more lugworms than he did.

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Brixham's Ross Parham is one of the competition's most successful entrants. He won the 50th event with a black bream of 5lb 15oz and 12 other classes with different catches

THE TORBAY SEA ANGLING FESTIVAL

MIKE MILLMAN, who has reported on this event since its beginnings, tells the story of catches – past and present – in an extravaganza of successes from boat and shore

The competition began in September 1968 and was organised by 10 participating clubs. Torbay being a prime holiday area, and with angling being a very popular pastime, hotel owners were swift to realise that such an event would have immense appeal to visitors who came from all parts of the country, and therefore they donated many trophies.

Coarse anglers from the Midlands made the most of the opportunity to catch, what was for them, a wide range of unusual species and maybe pay for the holiday with the winning fish. Charter boat angling with electronics, which had begun three years previously, guaranteed spectacular catches for those who boarded boats such as Our Unity, Ko I Nor, Girl Alison, Freebooter, Saltwind of Dart and The Breadwinner.

Initially, the majority of trophies were donated by hotel owners, the Hotels Association, clubs and individuals. Crime writer Agatha Christie, who lived at Greenway House overlooking the Dart Estuary, provided a silver cup for the best

fish from the area. It is now the most valuable of the 70 or so trophies that are on offer and is not retained by the winner, who instead receives a replica keepsake.

As the history of the competition reveals, it has always been very successful and has received as many as 3,000-day entries. When a visitor wins the top prize the organisers could not be more delighted, guaranteeing as it does, that it is not only locals who win that prize.

Visiting winners' fish have included a 101lb conger, 28lb 5oz turbot and a 6lb 1oz black bream. Among other top catches is a grey mullet of 8lb 2oz, a UK record three bearded rocklings of 3lb 2oz 8 drams – this not only winning the festival but a car on offer for a record fish taken during the event!

An unusual capture for September was a cod of 13lb 7oz taken at the Meadfoot Beach area shore. It scored a remarkable 269 per cent of specimen. Last year's festival was won by the magnificent bass of 17lb 4oz taken by Torquay's Simon Kingshott who was fishing an inshore wreck.



Visitor Malcolm Wright registered the event's biggest ever black bream at 6lb 1oz and won the 48th festival

This year's festival, the 53rd, starts at 7.30pm on September 2nd and can be fished for nine straight days. The top prize is £550 cash for the best specimen overall and there are three £275 awards for the best fish taken shore fishing, inshore boat fishing and wreck fishing.

Entry for the whole nine days is £45 while single day entry is £7. Juniors can enter for £9 or £2 per day but they are only allowed to take junior prizes. This year there are 14 weighing stations and everything you need to know is on the Torbay Festival's website: www.torbayfishingfestival.org

2022



SEA LEAGUE

The latest results from Britain's biggest event for shore match anglers

JUNE

26: REELFUN LEAGUE AND OPEN SERIES, ROUND 6

Littleton, 35 anglers

Result: 1st Dan Parker 3 fish 12lb 10oz (Not registered), 2nd Dave Shore 1 fish 9lb 2oz (Not registered), 3rd Paul Stanley Bristol 1 fish 6lb 5oz (2).

23-25: RAMSEY WEEK IOM

34 anglers

Result: A tough start with Mediterranean like conditions meant quite a few anglers struggled until the last half hour of the match as the light faded and the dogfish switched into feeding mode. As expected Dogmill's fished better with a low draw being favourite. At the end of day 1; Shane Russell and Ben Richards led the way with their zone wins. Day two was fished at Stone Boat, with conditions vastly different, a southerly wind and overcast skies. Ben Richards won Zone One emphatically with a bag of seventeen dogfish, Mark Quirk, 2nd and had moved into second overall on 4 points, with Shane Russell 3rd. In Zone 2, the top spots were taken Dave Walls, followed by multiple winner Alan Price. Blustery conditions greeted the anglers for day 3, with local rods taking all the top places; zone 1; Chris Roberts, Andrew Dugdale and Colin Skillicorn, Chris taking the best bag of the week, 19 dogfish. Zone 2 went to Ben Richards, Mark Quirk and Ian Ashcroft, the latter catching the best fish of the match a bass of 50cms converting to 2lb 8ozs. Ben completed a hat-trick of Zone wins to take top spot, the trophy and £500. Mark also had a hat-trick of second Zone placings to take second overall and £300. Chris's Zone win and the previous days third spot pushed him through to take third overall and £200. Results; 1st Ben Richards Ramsey, (10), Mark Quirk IOM (9), 3rd Chris Roberts IOM (8), 4th Shane Russell Old Colwyn (7), 5th Alan Price Rhyl (6), 6th Andrew Dugdale Peel (5), 7th Ben Bradstock Honiton (4), 8th Steven Quliiam IOM (3), 9th Stu Littlewood Onchan (2), 10th Billy Johnson. Dover (1). Zone winner David Walls IOM (1), biggest fish Ian Ashcroft IOM Bass 50cm (3).

19: NORTH WEST ASSOCIATION OF SEA ANGLERS OTTERSPOOL

43 anglers

Result: 1st Paul Bonner West Kirby 372cm (4), 2nd Bill Lindfield Greasby 371cm (3), 3rd Carl Edwards Bootle 290cm (2), Zone winner John Waugh Wallasey 223cm (1), longest fish, Ray 79cm Ian Griffith's Eastham (Not registered).

19: NORTHUMBRIAN JUBILEE OPEN, BANK HOUSE SOCIAL CLUB

Newbiggin, 168 anglers

Result: 55 of the 168 anglers taking part returned fish to the scales; 55 cod, 2 pollock, 1 coalfish and 6 flatties. Winner of the biggest fish was Steve Dixon 5lb 4oz (16), 2nd Callum Donohoe 5lb 3oz (Not registered), 3rd Craig Irvine 4lb 13oz (Not registered), 4th Alan O'Neil 4lb 8oz (13) and 5th John Bell 4lb 7oz (Not registered).

18: SAMALITE CHESIL LEAGUE

ROUND 6 OF 12

Chesil Centre, 24 anglers

Result: There was a slight swell to start with as the end of the ebb was running against the wind then the sea flattened off for the flood when wind and tide were in the same direction. A good mixture of species was caught; strap congers, pout, red and tub gurnards, poor cod, coalfish, dogfish, codling, black bream, scad and smoothhound. 10 codling were weighed in which is most unusual for a match in June, totally out of season for them. Results; 1st Pete Wood (Not registered), 2nd Julian Shambrook Torquay (1), 3rd Adam Brooks. Zone A; 1st Julian Shambrook 11lb 2 1/2oz, 4 pout, 1 conger, 1 dog, 1 hound, 2nd Dave Lane 10lb 10oz, 2 pout, 1 conger, 1 poor cod, 1 hound, 1 tub gurnard, 1 codling, 3rd Russell Preston, 7lb 11oz, 2 codling, 2 pout, 2 conger, 1 coalfish, 1 red gurnard, 1 dog. Zone B 1st Pete Wood, 18lb 8oz, 2 hounds, 1 pout, 2nd Adam Brooks, 10lb 12oz, 2 codling, 1 red gurnard, 1 pout, 1 hound, 3rd Ian Dancey, 7lb 13oz, 1 hound, 1 pout.

12: ANGLERS CORNER 2022 WEST WALES NATIONAL SEA LEAGUE

18 anglers

Result: 1st Tom Hamilton Llanelli 301cm (Not registered), 2nd Steve Smyth 294cm 3rd Shaun Tucker 191cm.

12: REELFUN LEAGUE AND OPEN SERIES, ROUND 5

Littleton, 36 angler

Result: 1st Scot Barton 1 fish 7lb 7oz (Not registered), 2nd Dave Shore 3 fish 2lb (Not registered), 3rd Dave Pearce 2 fish 1lb 13oz (Not registered)

12: SCOTTISH FEDERATION OF SEA ANGLERS

Riverside Road, 50 anglers

Result: 1st Zone C Tommy Tate Sunderland 612 points (5) 2nd Zone B Steve Roberts 460 (Not registered), 3rd Zone A Kenny McCoy Sunderland 425 (3). Longest fish Kenny McCoy 36cm flounder, Junior winner Jay Stoker

12: TWELVE KNIGHTS OPEN ABERAVON BEACH TO JACKSTONES

NAVEL CLUB

20 anglers

Result: 1st Peter Nichols Bridgend 62cm dogfish (Not registered), 2nd Daron Lawry Swansea 59 cm dogfish (Not registered), 3rd Steve Owen Port Talbot 57 cm dogfish

12: TRALEE BAY SAC

County Kerry, Ireland, Cappacloough, 31 anglers

Result: An early start to avoid the crowds made for a good match. Conditions looked perfect for a good match. Dogs and flats seemed most likely and within 10 minutes there was some of each on the beach. Some of the dogs even coming on flounder traces fished in the edge. Sadly, there was no garfish on the day but species hunter Brahim Lucid ticked another nice one off the list when getting a small Stingray of around 5lb. Results; 1st David O'Sullivan Tralee Bay 4 fish 200 points (3), 2nd Fiachra Cronin Tralee Bay 3 fish 150 points 3rd Chris O'Sullivan Tralee Bay 5 fish 130 points. Best round fish Brahim lucid 61cm Stingray

11: SOUTHERN LEAGUE ROUND

6 OF 12 & OPEN

Hayling Island, 65 anglers

Result: 1st Darren Bond Lancing 34lb 14oz (6), 2nd Robbie Taylor Deal 28lb 07 (5), 3rd Andy Pemberton 24lb 01oz (Not registered), zone winners Darren Crammer Southampton and Dan Mogridge Portsmouth (2), biggest fish was a smoothhound of 10lb 06oz landed by Mick Goodyer (Not registered)

REMINDER Penn Sea League entries will only be accepted from the match organiser or officials of the club concerned at least eight weeks in advance. If results are not returned to Sea Angler within a month of the event, the event will be declared void for Penn points.

Penn Monthly Winner for June;
Steve Dixon Seaham 16 Points.

LEADERBOARD UP TO 5TH JULY 2022

PREMIER DIVISION

Saul Page	Deal	57
Darren Bond	Lancing	52
Joe Wales	Shoreham	50
Ben Price	Holyhead	46
Shane Russell	Old Colwyn	46
Ben Bradstock	Honiton	38
Joe Plumstead	Pevensy Bay	33
Keith Smith	Blyth	30
Rob Tuck	Holland on Sea	30
Gary Medler	Gr Yarmouth	29
Neil Cutler	Gateshead	29
Paul Smith	South Shields	29
Paul Whelan	Ballybrack	29
Andrew Dugdale	Peel	27
Ben Arnold	Brighton	27
Julian Shambrook	Torquay	26
Alan Price	Rhyl	24
Chris Read	Cardiff	24
Darren Newland	Ryde	24
George Smith	Grimsby	24
Richard Yates	St Marg Bay	24
Wayne McGilloway	Greenfield	22
Bill Lindfield	Greasby	21
Dan Mogridge	Portsmouth	21
Philip A Lee	Sussex	21
Steve Swan	Herne Bay	21
James Madsen	Clevedon	20
Simon Drayton	Gainsborough	20
Billy Johnson	Deal	18
Henry Randell	Bodham	18
Paul Harrison	Aldeburgh	18
Tony (Bob) Roberts	Holyhead	17
Jane Cantwell	Ireland	16
Jimmy Price	Abergele	16
Louie Smith	Deal	16
Phil Arliss	Filey	16
Steve Dixon	Seaham	16
Ben Shepherd	Maryport	15
Mark Pinder	Ipswich	15
Paul Medd	Peterborough	15
Andy Bates	Louth	14
Dave Shorthouse	Kettering	14

Julian French	Brighton	14
Nicky Robson	Wallsend	14
Tom Wells	Deal	14
Fon Owen	Anglesey	13
Michael Laycock	Workington	13
Nick Snow	Bristol	13
Steve Gibson	Withernsea	13
Allan Beale	Middlesborough	12
Brian Harland	Whitby	12
Colin Crosby	Hastings	12
N Charlesworth	Hornsea	12
Shaun Tucker	Swansea	12
Chung Ho'Shing	Sheffield	11
Jim Morris	Chester	11
Mike Coates	Hull	11
Alby Allan	S Shore SAC	10
Ben Richards	Ramsey	10
Callum Richardson	Preston	10
Chris Isaac	Llanelli	10
Claire Loder	Cwmbran	10
Dave Chidzoy	Bridport	10
Joe Perry	Liverpool	10
Lloyd Summer	Bargoed	10
Matt Pitter	Southampton	10
Mike Larkin	Barrow	10
Sam Collier	Deal	10
Steve Potts	Gosforth	10
Steve Smyth	Cardiff	10
Alan Combe	Kirkcaldy	9
Chris Equall	Cardiff	9
Gareth Griffiths	Barrow I F	9
Mark Colman	Hornsea	9
Mark Quirk	IOM	9
Paul Stanley	Bristol	9
Chris Horn	Kirkcaldy	8
Chris Jones	Porthcawl	8
Chris Roberts	IOM	8
Daniel Eagle	Leiston	8
Gavin Owen	Consett	8
Jason Brown	Bridgwater	8
Justin Bird	Newport	8
Kevin Lewis	Dundee	8
Malcolm Stote	Lymington	8

Mike Rose	3 Counties	8
Paul Bonner	West Kirby	8
Robbie Taylor	Deal	8
Adrian Ford	Weston-s-M	7
David O'Sullivan	Tralee	7
Fiachra Cronin	Tralee Bay	7
Franco Attanasio	Saundersfoot	7
Gerald John	Caerphilly	7
Mark Cowell	Llantwit Major	7
Paul Garbutt	Skelton	7
Rich Hughes	Anglesey	7
Sandy Wason	Ayr	7
Aidan O'Halloran	Lisdoonvarna	6
Brett Cotter	London	6
Brogan Bayford	Bristol	6
Daniel Crump	Barry	6
Dave Llewelyn	Barry	6
Don Cook	Barry	6
Graham Adams	Shotley	6
Kris Lindsay	Holyhead	6
Mark Rogers	Maidstone	6
Nathan Elliott	Dover	6
Nigel Putbrace	Cardiff	6
Noel Fogarty	Dublin	6
Paul Short	Guisborough	6
Steve Adams	Chelmondiston	6
Tommy Tate	Sunderland	6
Anton James	Portsmouth	5
Darren Jones	Rhyl	5
Dave Pinchbeck	Dartford	5
Gary Wood	Holyhead	5
Ian Bowell	Ipswich	5
Ian Dancey	Waterlooville	5
Ian Nelson	Grimsby	5
James Lane	Weymouth	5
John Jones	Llanfairfechan	5
Keith Warren	Clevedon	5
Lewis Clark	Rochford	5
Paul Stevens	Worthing	5
Roy Tapper	Cardiff	5
Stuart Cresswell	Ayr	5
Stuart Littlewood	Onchan	5

Only those with
5 or more points
are listed



HOW IT WORKS

With £10,000 in tackle prizes spread over the two divisions, points, based on entries, are awarded to the top three, section winners and captors of the largest fish caught in each designated Penn match. Penn also awards a prize of a Spinfisher fixed-spool reel to the angler scoring the most points in matches shown in each issue. If there is a tie, the winner will be the angler whose total is from the greatest number of results and is then chosen on merit by the editor. An angler can win only one reel during the year. To win a prize you must be registered with the Penn Sea League – supply your name, address, phone and email. Send fixtures, results and league registration by email to Ian Bowell: ian.bowell@icloud.com

PENN
MONTHLY WINNER

WHAT'S ON

Your at-a-glance
match events
planner
● = Penn Sea League

JULY

- **PENN PLUS 23-24:** North East River Tyne Two day open Saturday 9-1pm/ Sunday 9.30-1.30pm, 18cm size limit, pegged and zoned. Contact Neil: 07816 401879 or Gav: 07956 180689
- **23:** Ipswich Sea Anglers summer open, River Alde 6-11pm, £20 entry, SAMF weight measure, except whiting and bass 27cm, everything else over 18cm. Pre-book only Matt LF: 07810 564399 or Rob Tuck: 07855 848967
- **23:** North Wales Teams of five and open, Talacre 2-6pm. Pre-book with Ben Price: 07393 201284, benplumb1992@gmail.com
- **24:** SAMF GB Summer League, Hessle foreshore 2.30-6.30, meet at 1.30-2pm, £20 all in straight measure everything counts, pre-book only, 40 pegs. Brett: 07834 559265
- **31:** Welsh FSA East Region Shore League round 5 & Open, Llantwit Major. Contact Steve Chadwick: 07777 689289

AUGUST

- **6:** North West Association of Sea Anglers, Bluebridge Fishing 16.30-20.15pm. Book on TRA. Pre-book essential. Contact: 07572 593272
- **7:** Holt SAC West Norfolk Challenge Round 4, Sutton Bridge. Contact Mike: 07858 758669 or Tony: 07780 793141, thomasamt@btinternet.com
- **7:** Tralee Bay SAC County Kerry, Ireland, Barrow 3-7pm. Chris O'Sullivan: atlantictackle@hotmail.com
- **7:** South Wales Sea Anglers open, Cardiff Foreshore. Contact Rob Cole: 07792 456428
- **13:** Colwyn Bay Victoria Sea Anglers Summer series 3rd leg Llandulas beach 5.30-9.30pm. Contact Darren Jones: 07595 375663

LONDON BRIDGE *

AUGUST

1	MON	04.57	6.80	17.11	6.69
2	TUE	05.30	6.75	17.42	6.63
3	WED	06.03	6.63	18.15	6.52
4	THU	06.39	6.44	18.51	6.42
5	FRI	07.19	6.23	19.33	6.31
6	SAT	08.07	6.03	20.26	6.19
7	SUN	09.11	5.86	21.39	6.07
8	MON	10.36	5.83	23.10	6.16
9	TUE	11.56	6.00	***	***
10	WED	00.27	6.44	13.09	6.31
11	THU	01.36	6.78	14.12	6.61
12	FRI	02.36	7.08	15.04	6.85
13	SAT	03.28	7.29	15.51	7.03
14	SUN	04.16	7.39	16.35	7.15
15	MON	05.01	7.37	17.15	7.17
16	TUE	05.43	7.21	17.54	7.08
17	WED	06.23	6.92	18.30	6.89
18	THU	07.01	6.57	19.08	6.62
19	FRI	07.39	6.22	19.51	6.32
20	SAT	08.22	5.90	20.43	5.99
21	SUN	09.15	5.63	21.49	5.74
22	MON	10.23	5.49	23.05	5.69
23	TUE	11.48	5.61	***	***
24	WED	00.22	5.92	12.59	5.98
25	THU	01.24	6.29	13.49	6.34
26	FRI	02.11	6.57	14.31	6.58
27	SAT	02.51	6.73	15.09	6.71
28	SUN	03.27	6.82	15.44	6.81
29	MON	04.00	6.90	16.16	6.89
30	TUE	04.32	6.95	16.47	6.92
31	WED	05.04	6.90	17.18	6.88

● **13:** Suffolk Memorial Sole Open in memory of David Bridges and Dave Cook, Sizewell. 7-12 Midnight, booking in 5-6pm Sizewell carpark, £20 entry, SAMF weight measure, over 18cm Prizes for biggest sole, biggest bag of soles and overall weight. Pre-book only Ian Bowell 07789651191, Robert Stebbings 07977940189

● **13-14:** Hookers Baits 2-day event, Cleveleys and Fleetwood 13th 6-10pm, 14th 6.30-10.30pm. Contact Jay: mantamaintenance@outlook.com for more information

● **14:** Llantwit Major charity open, Llantwit Major. Contact Mark Cowell: 07721 791210

● **16:** Samalite Chesil League round 8 of 12, Cogden, 5-10pm, best nine results from 12, pre-book only. Contact Dave Lane: 07977 132951, lanedc@talktalk.net

● **27:** Three Herrings open, fishing 4-8pm, measure/return 18cm pegged and zoned, £20.00 entry, book in at Glan Mor beach shop car park, south beach from 2-3:30pm, pre-book. Contact Tom Hughes: 01758 613291, Steve Roberts: 07989 280256, Gwyn Hughes: 07780 863162

● **27:** Southern League round 8 of 12 & open, Hillhead, 8pm-1am, pegged, measure & return, undersize fish count as 1oz, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2022 League entry £25, booking ends one hour before start, book only. Contact Darren: 07919 073232, Mike: 07983 579596, Ian: 07736 004714 or Ant: 07775 691916. Nick: southernleagueandopens@gmail.com

● **27:** BRAAS Open Westend beach Bognor Regis 20.30-01.30am, PO21 2QA, catch and release, booking in and draw for pegs from 1930, entry cost £8 senior £4 junior, optional pools flat £1 round £1, cash prize subject to entry. Contact John Small: 07799 762377 after 5pm

TIDES FOR AUGUST & SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER

1	THU	05.37	6.74	17.51	6.77
2	FRI	06.11	6.50	18.26	6.64
3	SAT	06.48	6.24	19.08	6.47
4	SUN	07.33	5.98	20.01	6.23
5	MON	08.33	5.70	21.16	5.98
6	TUE	10.06	5.55	22.53	6.02
7	WED	11.45	5.77	***	***
8	THU	00.18	6.36	13.03	6.24
9	FRI	01.30	6.81	14.01	6.67
10	SAT	02.26	7.15	14.50	6.96
11	SUN	03.13	7.32	15.32	7.14
12	MON	03.56	7.36	16.10	7.26
13	TUE	04.35	7.31	16.47	7.31
14	WED	05.12	7.15	17.21	7.22
15	THU	05.45	6.86	17.54	7.00
16	FRI	06.16	6.52	18.29	6.68
17	SAT	06.48	6.18	19.06	6.31
18	SUN	07.23	5.85	19.52	5.91
19	MON	08.12	5.51	20.57	5.55
20	TUE	09.24	5.25	22.24	5.45
21	WED	11.06	5.33	23.48	5.73
22	THU	***	***	12.25	5.79
23	FRI	00.52	6.19	13.18	6.25
24	SAT	01.41	6.55	14.02	6.57
25	SUN	02.21	6.75	14.39	6.75
26	MON	02.55	6.87	15.13	6.89
27	TUE	03.29	6.97	15.45	7.02
28	WED	04.02	7.03	16.18	7.10
29	THU	04.36	6.98	16.52	7.09
30	FRI	05.11	6.81	17.27	6.98

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* TIDAL VARIATIONS FROM LONDON

Wick	-2.29	Swansea	+4.42
Lossiemouth	-2.00	Milford Haven	+4.37
Aberdeen	-0.18	Fishguard	+5.44
Stonehaven	-0.08	Aberystwyth	-5.11
Cockenzie	+0.47	Barmouth	-5.45
Berwick	+0.54	Holyhead	-3.28
Blyth	+1.46	Menai Bridge	-3.08
North Shields	+1.47	Colwyn Bay	-2.47
Hartlepool	+1.55	Southport	-2.55
Whitby	+2.50	Blackpool	-2.50
Scarborough	+2.50	Morecambe	-2.33
Filey Bay	+2.45	Barrow (Ramsden)	-2.28
Bridlington	+2.58	Whitehaven	-2.30
Skegness	+4.29	Kirkcudbright Bay	-2.25
Hunstanton	+4.44	Girvan	-1.51
Cromer	+4.56	Ayr	-1.44
Lowestoft	-4.23	Felixstowe pier	-1.45
Aldeburgh	-2.53	Clacton	-1.19
Margate	-1.52	Dover	-2.47
Deal	-2.38	Dungeness	-3.05
Dover	-2.53	Eastbourne	-2.48
Dungeness	-3.05	Newhaven	-2.47
Eastbourne	-2.48	Brighton	-2.41
Newhaven	-2.47	Portsmouth	-2.36
Brighton	-2.41	Worthing	-2.36
Portsmouth	-2.29	Portsmouth	-2.39
Ryde	-2.29	Baginburn Head	+3.53
Southampton *	-2.53	Ballycotton	+3.45
Poole (Entrance) *	-2.53	Courtmacsherry	+3.32
-5.09		Baltimore	+3.35
Bournemouth *	-5.09	Bantry	+3.15
Swanage *	-5.19	Fenit pier	+3.13
Portland	+4.57	Kilrush	+4.02
Torquay	+4.40	Galway	+3.36
Dartmouth	+4.25	Clifden Bay	+3.41
Plymouth	+4.05	Westport Bay	+3.57
Fowey	+3.53	Sligo harbour	+4.25
Falmouth	+3.30	Killybegs	+4.21
Newquay	+3.32	Rathmullan	+4.43
Padstow	+3.45		
Barnstaple	+4.30		
Weymouth-super-Mare		NORTHERN IRELAND	
+5.05		Belfast	-2.47
Cardiff (Penarth) +5.15		Portrush	+5.48
Barry	+5.08	Red Bay	-2.41
		Carrickfergus	-2.42

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takes 3x8000 size spools

21x8.8cm

COOL BAGS

• Medium size:27x15x12 cm £26.99

• Large size:37x17x28 cm £35.99

WAIST BELT BAG PERFECT FOR WADING! £29.99

pliers, lures etc, 28x18x10cm

RIG WALLET LARGE £38.99

• Best on the market!

• Velcro secured

• Including 12 removable wallets (26x20 cm)

• Self-sealing zip sliders

BOAT BAG FOLDABLE £44.99

• Strong adjustable shoulder strap

• Carry handles on the sides

• 100% waterproof design

• Measuring tape on top

RIG STATION (FOR SERIOUS ANGLERS) £54.99

• 600D Polyester hard case

• 3 small tackleboxes included

• 6 large EVA rig winders included

• Comfortable EVA carry handle

• 53x20x9 cm

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takes up to 30 jigs,big plugs etc. without tangling, brilliant 25x20x22cm

ROLL UP CARRY BAG £54.99

Ideal for clothing, camera, etc

• PVC Tarpaulin waterproof material

• 40 size • 59x27x43 cm

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2 different lengths; 3 pc 155 cm rods to 450cm and 165 cm for 480cm rods. The reinforced inside contains 4 Velcro straps secure rods during transport & external pockets on both sides to bring both an umbrella/shelter or tripod.

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